The MASTER'S METHOD OF WINNING MEN

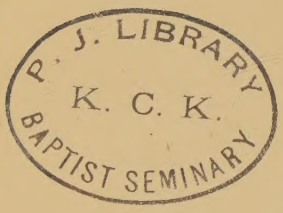
DWIGHT MALLORY PRATT

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

R. J. LIBRARY
K. C. K.
BAPTIST SEMINARY

WB24
P88


P. J. LIBRARY
K. C. K.
BAPTIST SEMINARY

P. J. LIBRARY
K. C. K.
BAPTIST SEMINARY

The Master's Method of Winning Men

By
DWIGHT MALLORY PRATT, D.D.
Author of "A Decade of Christian Endeavor," etc.

Introduction by
FREDERICK L. FAGLEY, D.D.
Executive Secretary of the Commission on Evangelism of the National Council of Congregational Churches

Soul Winning
Method of Soul Winn
Evangelism
(Title)

NEW YORK CHICAGO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

e1922
LIBRARY
CENTRAL BAPTIST SEMINARY
KANSAS CITY 2, KANSAS

Copyright, 1922, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 17 North Wabash Ave.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 75 Princes Street

269.1
P913

TO MY WIFE
My Best Helper in the Master's Work

7599

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT the first of April, 1922, Dr. Pratt sent me this manuscript to read over and to place with a publisher. At that time he was kind enough to ask me to write a brief introduction, which I was very glad to do. Within two weeks a message from Mrs. Pratt brought the word of his passing into the larger life. In the light of this one does not care to write an introduction of the usual sort.

Many men and women will read these chapters and be greatly strengthened in the inner life by his message; others who have not come into an experience of understanding will be encouraged to trust and venture forth in the quest of spiritual reality.

To those who knew Dr. Pratt intimately, these words will be a priceless heritage, summing up his experience with God and man, rich in personal testimony and vital with the Spirit's power.

Dr. Pratt worked on this book for a long time. Ten years ago, when I was a pastor in Cincinnati, he told me of his purpose, and we discussed frequently the plan and scope of his outline. I well remember one day in particular, as we sat in his library surrounded by choice books, Dr. Pratt read to me during the afternoon a manuscript upon the spiritual life, which I recognize as two of these

chapters. How his face glowed with anticipation and his voice thrilled with joy as he thought and spoke of his ambition to be of help to true seekers after spiritual knowledge through personal experience.

This is his message—the message the world needs and longs for, and seeks until it be found.

FREDERICK L. FAGLEY.

NEW YORK, N. Y.

FOREWORD

THE mission of the Church, and of all Christian believers whether considered individually or collectively, is to win the world to God through the love and grace and power of Jesus Christ. Every agency that represents the spirit and genius of Christianity should be employed to this end: music, art, literature, architecture, and every other product and invention of human thought. Any agency should be utilized that informs the mind, appeals to the heart, influences the judgment, moves the will, or commands and renews the spirit, through any of the five avenues to the soul: sight, hearing, feeling, taste, and the sense of fragrance. Through any of these channels the sense of beauty, goodness and truth may gain access to man's innermost being.

The three methods, however, that have been most blessed of God to the saving of men, from the dawn of Christianity to the present hour, are personal testimony and appeal, public preaching and the services of worship associated with it, and the written and spoken Word of God as recorded in the Bible. These have been effective in the order given. The first disciples were won by the personal influence of Jesus; then these, whether the original twelve, or later the seventy, or the one hundred and twenty after the resurrection, were sent out, often two by two, to tell the good

R. J. LIBRARY
K. C. K.
BAPTIST SEMINARY

tidings of God's love and saving grace to all whom they might meet in the country or villages along the way. The first classic instance of the good results that flow from this method is given in the first chapter of St. John's gospel. Jesus convinced John, his forerunner and prophet, John won Andrew, Andrew brought his brother Simon, Simon evidently informed his fellow-townsman Philip, Philip found Nathaniel, and Nathaniel brought some one else to confess that Jesus was the Son of God, the King of Israel, the Saviour of the world.

This method of personal communication was the one most effective in winning the Roman empire, in three centuries to an espousal of Christianity as the state religion. The beauteous lives of the early Christians and their ceaseless testimony in words, whether as slaves in Caesar's household or in other realms of civic and social life, at last accomplished their transforming work, as light penetrates darkness, or as leaven sends its contagion through the entire mass. This personal witness, by word and deed, by character and conduct, to the saving power of the risen Christ, was absolutely irresistible. It won a wondering empire from bitterest antagonism, deadliest hostility and most inhuman persecution to final surrender and allegiance.

Public preaching is only another emphasized form of personal instruction and appeal. Jesus employed it constantly. His sermon on the mount is the most marvelous exposition of truth that ever fell from human lips. Later on Peter's impassioned sermon on the day of Pentecost resulted in the conversion of

thousands and in the establishment of the Christian Church. From that day to this the glowing sermons of prophets, apostles and eloquent preachers have been one of the chief glories and most effective agencies of our religion.

Finally the written word. The Bible of itself has converted entire nations. The historian Green in accounting for the great moral change that came over England during the reign of Elizabeth, says: "England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible. * * * The whole temper of the nation was changed. A new conception of life and of man superseded the old. A new moral and religious impulse spread through every class. * * * The whole nation became, in fact, a Church."

The same can be said of Puritan New England. Its devotion to religion, its nobility of character, the exceptional quality of its spirit, its constructive power in the life of America, are to be traced to the Puritan's knowledge of and passionate love for the Bible.

The first of these three methods is the one upon which this little volume seeks to lay special emphasis. It is usually defined by the now well-worn term "personal evangelism."

D. M. P.

Contents

PART I

THE CHURCH'S SUPREME TASK

I. The Church Discovering Its Need . 13

II. The Master's Method 21

III. Qualifications 28

IV. The Difficulties of the Task . . 34

V. The Partnership of Personal Testimony and Public Preaching . 39

VI. The Opportunities of the Work . 47

VII. The Psychology of Soul Winning . 50

VIII. The Skill of a Great Evangelist . 54

IX. Soul Winning as an Art . . . 59

X. The Evangelism of the Apostles . 65

PART II

A SPIRITUAL CLINIC

XI. The Miracle of Regeneration . . 70

XII. Storming the Citadel of the Will . 75

XIII. The Battle of the Soul . . . 81

XIV. The Evolution of a Normal Christian Experience 85

XV. The Conversion of a Moralist . . 89

XVI. A False and Obstructive Humility . 92

XVII. Honest Difficulty with a Creed . 96

PART III

AN ESTIMATE OF VALUES

XVIII. The Rewards of Personal Evangelism 102

XIX. Conclusions 106

XX. A Final Word of Testimony . . 118

PART I

THE CHURCH'S SUPREME TASK

I

THE CHURCH DISCOVERING ITS NEED

MANY signs indicate that the world is on the threshold of a great spiritual awakening. Only such a universal revival can save mankind from rushing headlong to self-incurred destruction. The hour is supremely critical. Humanity is at the fork of the roads. The course the nations now choose will determine the destiny of the race for generations to come. Yet, in face of the gravest uncertainties, the follower of the living Christ must ever be an optimist. He knows in his innermost being the recuperative power of the Christian faith. As a student of history he is thoroughly conversant with the fact that Christianity has redeemed many a dark era from utter spiritual desolation, and sent humanity forward under the impulse and energy of a newly created life. The key to the future is in the keeping of the Church.

During the first decade and a half of the Twentieth Century, up to the fatal year 1914, the Church was at ease in Zion. Universal peace and prosperity had soothed the world into contentment and self-esteem. A rich, powerful, luxurious materialism

had nourished in mankind a sense of profound satisfaction and false security. The Church itself gradually and unconsciously came to share in this complacency, and to feel that man was steadily and surely evolving into a being of moral refinement and virtue. Its representatives were no longer under the compelling power of the mighty convictions, and the passion for humanity, that made the church of former generations so ceaselessly ardent in its zeal to seek and save that which was lost. In the foremost empire of the world it had become the tool of the state, and the servant of an ambitious and aggressive militarism. The educators of the civilized nations, trained for their vocations in the renowned universities of this empire, absorbed the negative beliefs of its critical agnosticism. They not only lost interest in the doctrines and destinies of the church, but in many cases came to look with indifference, not to say contempt, upon Christianity itself. The entire atmosphere of the scholastic and religious world was changed. Its benumbing influence seemed irresistible. Ministers of the Gospel lost their evangelical earnestness and enthusiasm. Their convictions and fervour relaxed. Their religious terminology changed. Certain great words, characteristic of the New Testament and of the theology of the Church for nineteen centuries, gradually dropped out of the vocabulary of its popular instructions: sin, perdition, atonement, redemption. The doctrine of a natural ethical development took the place of salvation through the mercy and grace of a sacrificial Redeemer.

Then came the sudden and appalling cataclysm of the great war. Civilization itself seemed to collapse. The Church was impotent to stay the universal debacle. The confident hope of a self-reliant world was blasted in a moment. Beneath all the gloss and culture and scientific achievement of the age man was found to be the same abysmal sinner as when, on the threshold of recorded history, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil continually." The brutalities and crimes of *kultur* outdid the cruelties and inhumanities of an earlier barbarism. Superficial minds, overwhelmed with pessimism and despair, affirmed that Christianity had failed. These gloomy interpreters of passing events lost all distinction between Churchanity and Christianity, between the body and the spirit, between the frailties of an impotent advocate and the truth which he so weakly betrayed.

In its latest diagnosis of world conditions, the Church, in the person of its most vital and competent representatives, has come to realize that its impotence and crucial failure were due to the superficiality of its religious and spiritual life, and to its lack of thorough instruction in the great doctrines of its historic faith. The picked young men of the world, who constituted the armies that saved civilization, were, for the most part, found to be appallingly ignorant, not only of the fundamental beliefs of the Church, but even of the very essence of Christianity as revealed in the New Testament. This same pathetic and devitalizing ignorance is known, also, to

characterize the rank and file of vast numbers enrolled in the membership of the Church. Their Christianity, sincere as far as it goes, is necessarily superficial and nominal because uninstructed and uninformed. It has no adequate hold on their convictions or intelligence, and thus no self-propagating power either in the home or the outside world. This accounts for the failure of the Church to master and mould, to penetrate and vitalize all the other realms of human life, as it should and as it is inherently able to do: education, politics, commerce, industry, government, and all international and interracial relationships.

A better day is near at hand. Prophetic minds and hearts are confident of this. The hour of awakening has come. The Church is summoning itself anew to its task. It is realizing as not for a generation that Christ's passion for humanity must have its counterpart in the soul of every true disciple. It has already introduced a new era of organization and benevolence, and is now studying with determined purpose the problem of its spiritual life and religious efficiency. Religious leaders in England and America, in increasing numbers, are alive to the seriousness of the times. Their solicitude is evidence that a world-wide revival has begun, or is at least possible. Hearts are turning with eager desire to the saving truths of the evangelical Gospel and to the simple means of grace that were such a redemptive power in days gone by: Bible reading and instruction, prayer, the family altar, the " upper room " of social fellowship and devotion, public worship, Scriptural

preaching, and personal ministry to individual need. The spiritual life of men to-day is as dependent, as in any former age, upon the religious faith and devotion that made Abraham the father of the faithful, Moses a prophet and religious statesman, Samuel the inaugurator of a new spiritual era in Israel, Isaiah a seer and optimist in spite of his nation's decline and moral degradation, John the Baptist the forerunner of a new dispensation, Peter and John the apostles of a victorious gospel, Paul, next to his Divine Master, the profoundest philosopher and interpreter of the spiritual life in human history, and Jesus the atoning Saviour of mankind.

The Church's power is internal, not external. It captures and controls institutions only as it converts and saves men. Instead of leading the world, it has too often allowed itself to be led. Instead of capturing civic and commercial influence and energy for the Kingdom of God, it has through the lack of an all-mastering spiritual vitality permitted selfish, godless, unscrupulous men to control our civilization for their own nefarious ends.

The Church is awakening to the fact, with vividness and conviction, that it must save the nation and the world if it would save itself. It is gaining a new consciousness of its divine mission. The passion to communicate its spiritual life to mankind, everywhere, must be kindled to its original Pentecostal glow. A religion that is not worth passing on to others is not worth possessing. The evidence of its value and vitality is seen in its desire for personal evangelism. It becomes a manly thing when lived,

discussed and proclaimed by manly men. It must be virile and robust as well as gentle and devout. The chosen disciples most noted for their love and spiritual enthusiasm were called "sons of thunder." Softness is not catalogued among the Christian graces; nor is heroism the mark of the man who despises things sacred and holy.

The religion of Jesus will become popular when it shines forth from regal lives, and is witnessed to by manly lips.

A man of fine business gifts and graces was urged to participate more fully in the missionary work of his church. He replied: "A man cannot shed light until he has it." He realized his inability to enthusiastically advocate missions, until his own soul was on fire with conviction as to their importance and necessity.

It is so in the realm of personal religion. The supreme need of the people in our churches is to get enough religion to give them "tongues of fire." The very effort to lead one's acquaintances and friends to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ is often the surest and quickest way to rectify his life, vitalize his faith, and make spiritual things seem real. In other words, the surest way to save one's self is to endeavour to save some one else. An advocate must necessarily be a convert. A wideawake convert becomes God's chosen agent for saving others.

Again we affirm, with renewed emphasis, that the key to the immediate future, as well as to the ultimate destiny of mankind, lies in the keeping of the Church. The Church must, consequently, inaugurate

a new crusade in the interest of the world's spiritual welfare. Society is saved from moral disintegration to the extent that its individual constituents are saved. Institutions are uplifted and made beneficent as men are uplifted and redeemed. The task of renewing the world's spiritual life is the most stupendous ever committed to human enterprise and intelligence. The Church has not always taken its calling seriously, but under the pressure of the world's present emergency the time has come for the centering of its best intelligence and energy upon its God-given mission. Those who see must communicate their vision to those who do not see; those whose hearts are warm with the glow of divine love must kindle other hearts with the flame of their own heaven-inspired passion; those who have gifts for organization and leadership must see to it that the spiritual forces and resources of the Church are enlisted in a new campaign of redemptive effort that shall leave no element in society untouched, and no portion of humanity outside the reach of Christian sympathy and love.

Some signs, in the midst of the world's present distractions and woes, are exceptionally heartening. The leading statesmen of Great Britain and of the United States, with the statesmen of other nations consenting and co-operating, are bending all their energies to the extermination of war and the establishment of permanent international unity and brotherhood, through the application of Christian principles and ideals to all human relationships. The Washington Conference could never have been pos-

sible had not Christianity and the Church trained these international leaders for the momentous task. The results achieved are prophetic of a new world of moral sanity, mutual trust and fraternal regard. The vision of such possibilities should thrill all Christian believers with new hope, and energize them with new purpose, passion and power. Their indifference and silence causes the outside world to be indifferent to its own need. For this reason the gospel message, from many a pulpit, has lost its power of appeal. A dead church can neutralize the effect of the most vital sermon. A humble ministry in the pulpit becomes "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" when re-lived and re-spoken by a people on fire with the love of Christ for the unsaved.

This, then, must be the program of the Church for the coming days. Men are just as reachable to-day as they ever were, provided there are enough vital hearts to create the atmosphere of conviction and make the appeal. Young Christians, especially, should be trained from the first for personal work, and made to feel that they have not really appropriated the teachings, life and spirit of the Divine Master until they are eager to win others to a knowledge of His love and service. Our churches should all become schools of personal evangelism and centers of outflowing spiritual power. The nature of this work is the theme of the chapters that follow.

II

THE MASTER'S METHOD

THE surest way to discover truth is through the study of a soul. No study is more fascinating. Nothing is so interesting as life; and the highest form of life is soul-life. John gave one of the strongest proofs of Jesus' greatness when he said: "He needed not that anyone should bear witness concerning man, for he himself knew what was in man."

It is not known what access Jesus had to the literature of the ancient world. Nothing is recorded regarding his scholarship or early education. It is evident, however, that he was familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures. His soul was saturated with its sacred truths. He knew by heart its wonderful histories, laws, lofty poetry, inspired prophecy, Messianic hopes and majestic revelations of God. His knowledge of God was the secret of his knowledge of men. And the marvelous thing in his ministry and teaching was that his knowledge of men was the means of expressing his knowledge of God. His entire work and teaching were personal. He lived with men, in touch with their every-day lives. He loved men and his whole interest centered in their spiritual welfare. He walked and talked and communed with people in the common relationships of daily life. He studied souls. He availed himself of every op-

portunity to instruct, comfort, help, guide, and become intimately acquainted with souls. From the Sermon on the Mount to the giving of his final great commission he was dealing, in word and deed, with the inner life of his fellow-men. His parables have no meaning and can be interpreted only as read in the light of the persons to whom they were spoken. They are all character studies. They are revelations of man's inner life. His interpretation of the mental and spiritual condition of mankind everywhere has no equivalent in human experience. He is unapproachable in his power to unveil the secrets of the soul. No one could conceal from him his character or intent. He fathomed with the ease and accuracy of divine intuition the heart of a child, Rabbi, Pharisee, publican, demoniac or saint. "He knew what was in man."

Jesus' entire ministry was spent in gaining access to souls. He could chide, comfort or convince as the need required. He won the wayward and brokenhearted by the tender ministries of his inexhaustible intelligence and sympathy. He was ever seeking to communicate the gift of eternal life. Nicodemus, the woman at the well, Matthew the publican, Zacchaeus, Jairus, bereaved parents, blind men, and those crippled and diseased, and people in every condition of mental, moral and spiritual need, were brought to newness of life by his personal word. He was ever meeting need because he was ever able to discern and interpret need.

It was an impressive moment in the synagogue at Nazareth when Jesus stood up in the presence of all

his home friends and neighbours and read that wonderful passage from Isaiah which foretold his own anointing as a preacher of the gospel: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor." "To-day," he said, "is this scripture fulfilled in your ears; for it is my mission to bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." His words were so modest, so simple, so weighted with love and spiritual power that "all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth."

Immediately after his baptism and spiritual testing in the wilderness he began to preach, going about teaching in all the synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease. It was an all-inclusive ministry to the minds and bodies and souls of men. It brought to them the comfort of physical healing, mental enlightenment, and spiritual redemption and relief. It left no evil unremedied, no sorrow unsoothed, no burden of guilt unrelieved.

As we analyze this gracious and saving work we find that Jesus' sympathy comprehended all phases of human need. He dealt with individuals with as much interest and absorbing devotion as with a multitude. He was as ardent in his teaching and preaching when he spoke to a single person or to a little group as when he addressed a vast assembly. In all these respects he was the ideal evangelist and set the standard for all ministers, missionaries, teachers, and

other representatives of the church, founded in his name.

Some preachers have no enthusiasm unless they can address a great crowd; some find personal work hard, not to say repellent. Their passion for souls is not such as to make them comprehend the value of the individual. They weary of the routine of pastoral work, and there are ministers of the gospel who refuse to give time to personal or family visitation. The spiritual greatness and effectiveness of this work has never commanded their minds and hearts. Compare with this the all-encompassing sympathy and vision of Jesus. How marvelously he gave himself without limit or thought of self to all whose need made a claim upon his compassion and love.

1. *Individuals.* The classic illustration of personal ministry is Jesus' interview with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. With what absorbing interest, intellectual skill, and spiritual ardour he gave himself to the winning of this wayward soul to God. With gracious tact he penetrated to the hidden burden of her heart and saw that beneath all her seeming unconcern and moral waywardness there was a great hungering for truth and for a better life. His thoroughness was both tender, skillful, scientific, and uncompromising. He left no sin uncovered, and no chance for evasion and escape. The masterfulness of his method, coupled with its gracious sympathy, won a soul from darkness to light, from impenitence to peace, and made her a soul-winner among the very people who had shared her sin and unbelief.

It is impossible to know men *en masse* without first

knowing intimately the character, quality, condition, need, and experience of the individual soul. Jesus knew men because he first knew man. His personal work qualified him for his public work. He could understand a multitude because he could fathom and was thoroughly familiar with the inner life of the individual men and women with whom he came in contact daily. The profoundest psychologies of life, of truth, and of human nature can be learned in no other way. The effective and winsome preacher must know the individual soul in order to know men and deal with men in large aggregations. Here lies the secret of Jesus' marvelous skill and power. Back of all his public work lay the ceaseless energy and accuracy of his personal work. It was one of the chief sources of his intellectual power as well as of his spiritual vision, and no man can attain a masterful grip on truth or any profound knowledge of human nature without dealing at first hand and at close range with the mental make-up, moral condition, and spiritual experience of individuals.

While Jesus went everywhere preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, it would almost seem as though the greater part of his time was devoted to dealing with people one by one, or in little groups. It was now a man afflicted with some physical malady, blindness, deafness, sickness, inherited infirmity; or some bereaved and broken-hearted mother following the lifeless body of her son to its place of burial. Such instances in his career of ministering love are manifold. Out of them sprang his effectiveness with the multitude.

2. *Jesus loved also to deal with little groups of men.* A dozen inquiring disciples were to him a great congregation. One who cannot thus appreciate the worth of the few, and the supreme opportunity that a little company presents, can never adequately meet the needs of a vast assembly. The Master's success with a dozen men laid the foundation of all his future work and was the means of his establishing a church which for two thousand years has grown in effectiveness and power. The most constructive evangelism comes through instruction. Jesus began to *teach* as well as to *preach* on the threshold of his work. The educational part of his ministry was conspicuous to the end. The heart can love only as the mind becomes acquainted with the true object of affection. Instruction in the Word lies at the very basis of all redemptive work. Jesus has contributed more to the intellectual life, energy, and enthusiasm of mankind than all other persons and influences combined. He put beneath the spiritual life of men the foundation of substantial knowledge. He made men know God in order to love Him, and so of truth and of all the great spiritual realities of our existence.

3. It is needless to emphasize Christ's ministry to *the multitude.* He never saw a great concourse of people without being moved to the depths of his being with profound compassion. He loved all souls because he saw the worth of individual souls. He loved humanity as dear to the heart of God. He fed the multitude, bodily, spiritually, that they might be nourished in all the qualities of a divine manhood.

His passion for souls culminated in his supreme self-giving on Calvary. His evangelism centers in his cross. The outpouring of his life there was nothing new in his experience and ministry. From the very first his purpose and his way led to the mount of sacrifice. All saving evangelism must take its pattern from his method and spirit—it must know the worth of the individual and give itself unstintedly to personal work; it must gather little groups for counsel and instruction; it must love the multitude with a great compassion, and be willing to pour out life in supreme sacrifice in order to save.

The Christian's inspiration to personal work comes from the individual ministries of Jesus. His apostles gained their wonderful power from imitating him. Every great evangelist from Paul to the present day became a soul-winner by reproducing his method and spirit. The gospel is direct and personal from beginning to end. There is not an abstract or indirect word in all the teaching of Jesus. He ever stood face to face with souls. His early disciples were all won through personal influence and appeal.

In Christ's own personal ministries the Church has the key to its true method and power; and every pastor, evangelist and Christian worker the pledge of his own success as a winner of souls.

III

QUALIFICATIONS

THE first three qualifications for successful personal evangelism are:

(a) An unquestioning assurance of the fact and necessity of the new birth through one's own vital experience of the regenerate life.

(b) Familiar acquaintance with the Bible and its working passages.

(c) Ability to read men, coupled with tact and skill in one's method of approach.

1. Any doubt as to the universal necessity of the new birth cuts the nerve of conviction and power. The whole question hinges here. Personal evangelism finds its incentive and starting-point in the teaching of Jesus in the third chapter of St. John's Gospel. His word to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again," must be our word to every inquiring soul. The third chapter of Romans is its counterpart: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "There is none righteous, no not one." The necessity of redemption and of a Saviour rests upon these teachings of the Master and of his apostles.

All Scripture confirms this view of human need. From Genesis to Revelation there is not a verse that intimates that any member or portion of the race can win, by his own inherent and acquired goodness, a

place in the Kingdom of God. Salvation is not of works. Paul had in mind all humanity—the cultured and virtuous as well as the debased and criminal—when he said: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

The apprehension of this truth comes through experience. No regenerate man ever bases his claim to divine favour on his own self-acquired righteousness. His spiritual renewal carries with it a profound self-revelation. He discovers the sinfulness and need of universal human nature when his own heart is unveiled in the presence of the holy Christ. He may have been brought up in an ideal Christian home; nourished by prayer and religious instruction; renewed in heart so early that he never could recall the time when he did not love God, yet he is as conscious of his unworthiness and inherent need as if redeemed in later years from a wayward and corrupt life. In fact the earlier the conversion, and the more innocent the heart of blinding and benumbing evil, the more intelligent and masterful is the conviction that the supreme need of mankind is spiritual renewal through the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

2. Adequate intellectual and spiritual equipment is gained only by familiar acquaintance with the Word of God. The Bible is the text-book of the spiritual life. It meets every variety of moral need. Its working passages should be at the finger-tips and tongue's end of every Christian worker. If fencing with the sword is an art that requires practice and skill, much finer is the mental and spiritual art of

using effectively "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

A skeptic, a self-righteous man, a hypocrite, a profligate, a timid, halting inquirer, cannot be dealt with in the same way. They differ in intellectual attitude and desire, and in moral quality. Scripture that applies to one may not apply to another. To know how to select verses and passages with reference to the special case in hand soon becomes a facile art under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The human teacher may also be of great service. The writer is more indebted to a lay evangelist for whatever skill he may have in the use of the Bible in personal work than to the theological seminary. In the seminary the student becomes familiar with exegesis, theology, church history, and the method of constructing sermons, but is not taught how to use the Bible in dealing with individual souls. For this reason a few weeks with a skilled evangelist is of untold value to one who wishes to become efficient in winning men individually to God.

Nothing in such personal work is more useless than mere argument. To convince the intellect is not to convert the soul. People make little of logic in moral choices and action; and for this reason, as another has ably said, "it is impossible to argue one *out* of a belief *into* which he was not argued." Moral causes lie back of mental processes. A bad man's thinking is instantly rectified when his heart is changed. Nothing will so quickly reach his heart, convince his intelect and subdue his will as the Word of God, tactfully, tenderly and intelligently used. To

relate its truths to the mental and moral state of an eager, inquiring yet unrepentant soul is a divinely beautiful art. By no process of study can one so quickly and completely master the nature and laws of the spiritual life, the secret of redemption, the condition and need of the human heart, the deeper truths of theology, as by the close application of the Word of God to individual need.

3. Such personal work, intelligently and skilfully done, results in a marvelous ability to read men. It is nothing less than the science of interpreting souls. It cannot be mastered without the clinic, any more than chemistry can be mastered without the laboratory, or the physician's art without personal practice, or surgery without a body upon which to operate. Face to face with souls we become acquainted with their innermost life. In the light of God's word the secrets of the heart are unveiled. One who, as a spiritual physician, is skilled in diagnosis, and, as a spiritual surgeon, knows how to probe to the very center of the malady, is able to read men far better than they can read themselves. Face, voice, manner, become infallible guides to the quality of the inner life. Specialists in soul-winning,—and every pastor should be a specialist,—become familiar with all varieties of mental action and moral mood. The intricacies of the soul's activities are very subtle. Sincerity and self-deception; eager desire and evasion, often seemingly go hand in hand. The accuracy of Jeremiah's diagnosis becomes apparent in untold instances: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" His

very language implies that the heart may not be conscious of its own trickeries and insubordination.

No two individuals can be approached in the same way. Unbelievers differ in temperament, training, inheritance, education, moral capacity, motive and condition. Some are antagonistic to truth, others eagerly searching for it; some sincere, others hypocritical; some upright in conduct, others vicious and wilfully evil; some timid, hesitant, introspective, sensitive in heart and conscience, others brazen, unrefined, and utterly unconscious of any spiritual need.

One who ministers to the fundamental want of the individual soul soon discovers that he must cover a wide range of experience. He is likely to find in the first twelve he meets as great a variety as Jesus found in his strangely differing apostles, ranging in temperament and character all the way from the loving and trustful John to the doubting Thomas; from the ardent and ultimately most loyal Peter to the false and traitorous Judas. These varieties include agnostics, skeptics, infidels, doubters of all kinds, slaves to appetite and to every evil and ungoverned passion, hypocrites, scorners, revilers, the self-deceived, proud, wilful, worldly self-righteous, the ignorant, spiritually blind, religiously untaught or with perverted views of religion, the penitent, the morally weak and disheartened, those dissatisfied with self, hungry for truth, eager for something better, craving friendship and help, ready for guidance, those who have never through all their mature years given up the prayers of their childhood nor the reading of the Bible, and yet who are conscious of not

being in right relations to God, themselves or their fellow-men, who are very near the kingdom of God, but have not entered in. One who keeps in touch with men and seeks helpfully to enter into the secret of their inner life, finds all these varieties of mental and moral condition, ranging from hostile unbelief and bitter antagonism to the spirit of eager and prayerful inquiry. He must be able to enter intelligently and sympathetically into the innermost thought and experience of all these and minister as helpfully to those reared in infidelity and sin as to those born to a heritage of faith and devotion.

IV

THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE TASK

THE storming of a fortress is child's play compared with the storming of the citadel of an individual soul. Any one with physical courage and the enginery of war can do the former, but it takes one enlightened by divine grace, energized by a mighty and discerning love, and fortified with unhesitating conviction of a universal human need, to place some people, unconscious of their spiritual condition, in the category of the unsaved, and then face the personal task of winning them to God. To classify them, in personal approach and appeal, as "sinners," in supreme need of the saving grace of an infinite and sacrificial love, from the human point of view seems effrontery of the most offensive, not to say insolent, kind. Yet no pastor, evangelist, or personal worker is qualified to represent the teaching of the Master, or do redemptive work until he has learned that God is no respecter of persons, and that the fundamental and universal human need is the same in the suburbs as in the slums, in brightest America as in darkest Africa. Let the philosophers have their logomachies about the moral status of the race, and theologians their controversies over the oft-misrepresented and perverted term "total depravity"; but the winner of souls must never be doubtful or

timid in the presence of any person, however noble in the terminology of earth, who is still unacquainted with the saving grace of God as revealed in the sacrificial work of Jesus.

The most difficult task in all preaching and personal work is to treat certain cultured, delightful, well-environed people as sinners. The word *sinner* is used intentionally, for until we can employ it in our mental conception of an actual condition, we are fundamentally skeptical of a universal spiritual need. Nothing so paralyzes one's power and renders him utterly impotent and useless in personal work as to doubt the absolute necessity of the new birth. The surgeon is compelled to be as thorough and scientific in the home of wealth and comfort as in the home of poverty and unsanitary conditions. The same heroism and skill are imperative in spiritual diagnosis. The most subtle and fatal forms of irreligion are found under the garb of culture. A profound spiritual intelligence and an unflinching heroism are prerequisites in the scientific treatment of such spiritual need.

With thoroughness must go a most gracious and winsome tactfulness. To offend is to lose one's opportunity, except when offense is the result of God's truth, lovingly and skilfully applied. In such case the sign of anger or of being offended may be the first step in the process of conversion and recovery, and the certain proof that the Holy Spirit has begun his work of breaking down the proud, stubborn, insubordinate will.

The offense must, however, not be personal. The

issue must be between the inquirer's soul and God, and not a controversy with his pastor and friend. The natural heart, in its pride of intellect and in its self-righteousness, resents the New Testament declaration that the "mind of the flesh is enmity against God." Men often become violently angry at the implication of such enmity on their part. Such anger is only increasing evidence that they are utterly unacquainted with the antagonism of the unrenewed heart to the will of God. The issue had perhaps never before been intelligently made. The conflict had, possibly, never been openly and consciously joined. But it is without exception true that the natural heart, the "mind of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Human society abounds in people of this class. They attend our churches, are in our homes of intelligence and culture, are morally upright, yet are living without conscious relation to God or any conviction of their supreme personal need of Him.

No class of people is so religiously neglected as this. They seem unapproachable. They are apparently self-satisfied and self-sufficient. To seek access to their inner life seems obtrusive, not to say discourteous. How, then, shall people of such refinement and moral integrity be won to a conviction of personal need?

This is the problem of the Church, of Christianity, of personal evangelism.

Emphasis is placed on this particular class, for no one questions the imperative need of the lower grades of society. It is taken for granted that if

evangelistic effort is to be made it will be made here.

Christianity, however, is a failure to the extent that it leaves any realms of human life, high or low, unentered and unsaved. The social nature of man calls for social forms of religious life and work. People cannot be reached at arm's length. The message spoken from pulpit or platform may sometimes carry truth from heart to heart, but the larger work of the world's evangelization must be done through personal touch. Hand must grasp hand; eye must look into eye; heart must feel the sympathy and friendship of heart. The fraternities of Christian companionship and love are the most satisfying and compelling on earth. To master the science of personal approach is the supreme duty and the noblest achievement of the Church, and of the individual disciple of Jesus Christ. The three thousand souls converted on the Day of Pentecost have often, and wrongly, been credited alone to the power of Peter's sermon. That sermon did, indeed, have in it the passion and pathos of Christ's sacrificial love and the new enduement of the Spirit; but back of it and in and through it were the prayers and faith and testimony of one hundred and twenty disciples equally faithful in witnessing to the power of the risen Saviour, equally dedicated to personal work, equally eager for the souls of their fellow-men. Without them Peter's sermon would have fallen lifeless upon the hearts of the hostile and unbelieving multitudes in the throbbing metropolis. Their tongues of fire, their unity of spirit, and their manifest enduement from on high, wrought the first great miracle of

astonishment and conviction, and created the atmosphere of wonder, expectation and faith that made it possible for Peter to harvest the mighty spiritual fruitage of that marvelous day. So unspeakably important is this partnership of the people with their minister in witnessing to the saving power of the Gospel, that the following chapter is given entirely to a study of the social, psychological and spiritual processes that made possible the mighty miracle of Pentecost, as recorded in the second chapter of the *Acts of the Apostles,* and that resulted in organized Christianity and the founding of the Christian Church.

V

THE PARTNERSHIP OF PERSONAL TESTIMONY AND PUBLIC PREACHING

THE preacher is not an independent advocate, but a partner in a great spiritual enterprise. The pulpit is not an isolated institution, but simply one factor in an important social and religious agency. The two are interdependent and neither can attain extensive influence or permanent success alone. The failure of the people to realize this accounts for the corresponding impotence of the Church. No successful modern evangelist, whether a Moody, a Chapman, a "Gipsy" Smith, or a "Billy" Sunday, accepts an engagement without the assured co-operation and spiritual sympathy of the people. He insists, as a primary condition of success, upon their united participation in organization, effort, prayer and spiritual preparation. This preliminary work is both a psychological and a spiritual necessity. It focuses the public mind upon the fundamental importance of religion, and upon the need of personal salvation. It puts the Church back of the enterprise. It throws responsibility for its success upon the hearts and shoulders of the entire membership.

In doing this the evangelist recognizes a well-known psychological law, operative in every realm of

human interest, viz., that little or no impression can be made upon one who has no interest in or knowledge of the subject to be presented. A lecture on art attracts only those who are interested in art. A majestic symphony or oratorio appeals to none but lovers of music. Spiritual things mean nothing to secular minds or to those who give themselves to dissipation and pleasure. In accordance with this law, a community must be awakened to curiosity or genuine interest before it responds to religious influence or appeal.

There is ancient and scriptural precedent for this. No one can thoughtfully read the story of Pentecost in the second chapter of Acts without being profoundly impressed with the striking operation of this law. Six score disciples, after forty days of frequent and intimate fellowship with the risen Lord, after receiving from him their commission to preach his everlasting Gospel, and the promise of the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence and power, gave themselves to many days of confident and expectant prayer. In the fellowship of that experience they were so moulded together in unity of love and purpose that they became not only willing and glad recipients of a new spiritual energy and passion, but also ardent and eloquent witnesses to the wonder and power of the Pentecostal miracle. Jerusalem was stirred from center to circumference. The entire city felt the impulse and impact of this new and mysterious life. People everywhere began to inquire as to its nature and meaning. Some mocked, others were stirred to fear and antagonism, while multitudes were

smitten with conviction and made conscious of their need of God. Whatever the mood or emotion, the impression made by the testimony of the disciples was universal and profound.

At this point of public interest Peter arose and made an address so eloquent and impassioned, so convincing and inspired that thousands, in penitence and confession, were moved to espouse openly the new faith and become ardent disciples of the risen Christ. This spiritual revolution on the part of three thousand souls was the birth hour of the Christian Church. It was not like the impulsive and fickle movement of the populace at the time of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but was the result of a permanent spiritual reaction and renewal which gained numbers and momentum as the days and weeks and months went by.

It has been customary to ascribe this far-reaching Pentecostal revival to the convicting and converting power of Peter's heart-searching sermon, and certainly no one can gainsay its spiritual energy and effectiveness; but had the apostle stood alone and spoken under ordinary circumstances his words, in spite of their passion and eloquence, would have fallen impotently upon dull and unresponsive ears. The foundation of his success was laid in the ardent testimony and spiritual earnestness of his one hundred and twenty fellow Christians. All Jerusalem had been set on fire by the glow of their love, the courage of their faith, the unity of their spirit, and the convincing power of their words.

This preparatory work was all the more beneficent

and far-reaching for being spontaneous rather than intentional, impromptu in its expression of a new and irrepressible love rather than a studied purpose to influence a metropolis; nevertheless, it was propaganda of the most wholesome and effective kind. It prepared the way for Peter's eloquent and convincing address.

The entire program of this exceptional day throws a marvelous light on the psychology of social religion and on the laws which operate in the spiritual life of large aggregations of people. It compels one to marvel at the sensitiveness of what may be termed the community soul. Men do indeed think and act as individuals, but just as truly they act under the influence of a corporate consciousness. They are swayed *en masse*. They move, often, as a unit, and can be reached only as the popular interest and feeling are enlisted for or against some particular interest or cause. Consequently an address or appeal, whether political or religious, becomes effective in proportion as a city or community is prepared for its presentation. This constitutes the significance and purpose of all that is included under the much used word "propaganda." The world has had sad occasion to know the far-reaching and often fatal power of this method of influencing men and nations. The term "propaganda" may cover all kinds of secret, subtle and malign influence intended to mislead and pervert the people of an empire or a hemisphere. Germany wrought her disastrous work upon her own people, and upon the people of other lands in accordance with this subtle psychological law. By pervert-

ing men's minds, everywhere, through falsehood, cunning and deceit she hoped to prepare the way for her long anticipated conquest of the world.

But propaganda, thus perverted and malignly used, stands for a power and process that may be entirely beneficent and essential to the spiritual recovery of benighted, misguided or morally debased people. It recognizes a psychological law and a social solidarity that must be intelligently utilized before society can be regenerated in the springs of its intellectual and moral life.

Until the Church awakes to the necessity of a similar preparatory work for the preaching of the Gospel its expenditure of time, money and effort will, largely, be in vain. The average Christian is not a propagandist. He has no story to tell, no good news to proclaim, no cause to advocate, no passion for social redemption. Hence the Jerusalem of to-day is unprepared for the prophetic message of its inspired and divinely commissioned Peters. Hence it is that the modern apostles are, so many of them, passionless and impotent. They are not vitalized by an environment of spiritual enthusiasm and purpose. They hear no tongues of fire on the part of their fellow-disciples, telling the story of God's grace to all classes of people, in all parts of the community or metropolis.

Were the followers of the Divine Master alive to their opportunity and mission, they could make every village and city in our land throb with as intense an eagerness and interest as did Jerusalem when the one hundred and twenty went everywhere telling the story of their new life through the power

of the risen Christ. Assuredly, if Christians have no story to tell, no testimony to give, no wondrous gospel to proclaim, the populace will care little for the individual Peters who stand in their separate pulpits and proclaim truth to which the public attention has not been called.

There seems little hope of mastering and moulding human society with the spirit, principles and teachings of Jesus Christ until his disciples, in large numbers, become witnesses to the eternal verities and spiritual potentialities of their faith. His final command was, " Ye shall be my witnesses * * * unto the uttermost part of the earth." The Pentecostal awakening that gave birth to organized Christianity and to modern history was the product of the unanimous testimony and ardour of all of Christ's followers in Jerusalem. The word " propaganda," made offensive by its perversions and malign uses, nevertheless stands for the most vital work the Church is called to do. The great cities of America, and the nation entire, could be made to pulsate with eager inquiry and intense spiritual desire if all Christians were vital and winsome propagandists of their faith. In this way only has Christian Science made its rapid and surprising growth. The great majority of its adherents are ardent advocates of their cult. They do not rely upon a prophetic priesthood or ministry, but take upon themselves the espousal of the cause to which they belong.

The mission of evangelical Christianity to win the world to God will never be accomplished on any adequate scale until it so vitalizes its adherents as to

make them propagandists of their divinely given gospel. Every agency of the Church should now be focused on enlisting its entire membership vitally in evangelistic effort; that is in the fundamental and preparatory work of awakening interest in Christianity on the part of the outside world—the secular, materialistic, non-Christian portion of society.

When this extended testimony is given—that is, when the members of the Christian Church begin to talk about their religion in a normal, earnest and practical way as they do about other things of commanding interest in the common fellowships of daily life, the non-Christian world will open its eyes with amazement, will begin to inquire the meaning of this social interest and solicitude, and will be heard asking, "What must we do to be saved?"

This is not a sentimental view of personal religion. If the teachings of Christ are the foundation of virtue and social order, if they contain the remedy for all the world's moral corruption and chaos, for its selfishness, inhumanities and misgovernment, if they guarantee righteousness and brotherly love, spiritual enlightenment and redemption for all mankind, then no theme should be so much on the lips of intelligent people, and so thoroughly discussed and advocated, as the only hope of the race. The strange human perversion that makes people silent upon the one subject that is fundamental to all of mankind's highest interests is one of the surest evidences of their need of spiritual emancipation and renewal. This bondage is due to the enslaving power of sin. Tongues are loosed when the Spirit of God breaks

through the social conventions that hold men captive to earth. Hearts that never knew the courage and the delight of freedom voice their new-found joy when unshackled from the fetters of worldly fear. The disciples in Jerusalem were not emotionalists, but spiritually emancipated men and women, who dared say their souls were their own, and who dared to make their wondrous experience the theme of ordinary conversation. This is the emancipation that the Christian Church most needs to-day, and which it must experience if it is ever to carry the saving truths of its religion out into the world of secular thought and spiritual impoverishment, and make men believe that there is a remedy for all their follies, failures, sorrows, and sins. The world has lost its bearings. It is perishing through its ignorance and need of God. The time has come for the Church, in all its membership, to recover its poise and purpose, its passion and power, its convictions and courage, its spiritual enthusiasms and enterprise, and enter upon a new era of intelligent and confident propagandism. For Christian believers to keep silent to-day, in the midst of such universal need, is a sin against the Holy Spirit of Pentecost, an unspeakable wrong to one's fellow-men, and a practical impeachment of the genuineness of our personal Christianity. "Ye shall be my witnesses," is Christ's permanent command to his disciples everywhere.

VI

THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE WORK

THE difficulties are not as many and great as the opportunities. Jesus said, "the fields are white unto the harvest." It is ever so. The human heart, out of fellowship with God, is never satisfied. If approached tactfully and in the spirit of genuine friendship, people, with rare exceptions, welcome conversation on the subject of religion, which means on the deepest and most fundamental problems of life. Even if skeptical of the vital power of Christianity they are, nevertheless, profoundly interested in the themes it presents and in the discussion it compels.

A certain young man gifted with skill in personal approach, and eager to help his associates to find the secret of the Christian life, is constantly leading up to conversation on the matter of personal religion by such incidental questions as this: "Where did you go to church yesterday?" The answer may be: "I do not go to church at all." This opens the way for asking the reasons for not going. The rest of the way is easy, for without any seeming desire to pry into matters of personal experience, the conversation drifts into a frank discussion of the most vital problems of the spiritual life. This earnest Christian young man has conversed with scores of young men

since his public confession of Christ, and says there is scarcely a fellow he meets that is not only glad, but in many cases eager to discuss matters of faith, personal religion, and the character and claims of Jesus.

More people are waiting and wishing for the kind interest of some earnest Christian in their spiritual welfare than is ever suspected. The personal worker soon discovers this fact, for many a person approached says to him: "I am grateful to you for speaking to me on this subject; I have been waiting for this for years and have wondered why it is that Christian people, professing to believe as they do, never speak to their friends about the salvation of their souls." The writer once had the greatest difficulty in making a splendid young man, reared in a Christian home, believe there was anything real or vital in the religion of Christ, because, he said: "You are the first person that ever spoke to me on the subject of my personal relation to God." "Why is it," he asked, "if the salvation of the soul is of such great importance, that people who profess to be saved never speak about it?"

His perplexity was natural and well-founded. It is a severe reflection on the religious genuineness and vitality of the average church member that he seems to take no personal interest in the spiritual redemption of his friends and associates in the daily walks of life. To the onlooker it is thus made to appear a matter of no concern. If the non-religious world is indifferent and skeptical it must, in a large measure, be attributed to the indifference of those who,

by their public profession of faith, have proclaimed to the world their belief in the necessity of salvation,—a necessity which they seemingly deny by their silence and unconcern.

The people in a community who are unacquainted with the vital and saving element in Christian experience would soon awake to great concern regarding their spiritual state, were Christian people manifestly and universally concerned in their behalf. The extent of their interest, under present conditions, is a marked tribute to the fact that man is fundamentally religious, and that in spite of his own neglect, worldliness, and possibly wilful sin, he is still more interested in problems of the soul than in anything else. His very nature cries out for a satisfaction that he does not know, and which he is intuitively conscious he ought to know. He experiences, even in his skepticism, the soul hunger so vividly expressed by the Psalmist when he said: "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God."

It is this fundamental need of the human soul that gives the personal worker his ceaseless and promising opportunity. It may always be counted on. Few men are so lost to the claims of their own manhood, to say nothing of the voice of God in the soul, as to repel the approach of a love that is seeking their highest good. For the most part they are coveting the interest of some trusted friend, who is experienced enough in the things of the Spirit, to help them out of their perplexity and spiritual impotence.

VII

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOUL-WINNING

THE word *psychology* is not here used in a technical sense. A college professor or the writer of a text-book may limit the term exclusively to the study of mental phenomena and the facts of consciousness; but to the personal evangelist—the winner of souls—the word *soul* includes moral as well as mental capacity and condition. For all practical purposes it is synonymous with *spirit*. Intellect, reason, conscience, the affections and the will are all faculties of the soul, and, in the realm of morals, the religious psychologist must be an adept in fathoming all the hidden recesses of man's innermost being. Soul-winning is impossible without the capacity thoroughly and accurately to diagnose the mental, moral and spiritual status of the soul to be won. The personal worker must be able to penetrate to the secret of another's personality, and place him in the moral and spiritual category to which he belongs. This is the highest form of psychological science. We make no apology for using the word *psychology* in this all-inclusive and practical sense.

The power to know and interpret the human soul and spirit is preeminently a spiritual enduement. "Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man," God re-

veals unto us through the Spirit: "for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

But the deep things of God include the deep things of man, for the things which are foolishness to the "natural man," and which he cannot know because they are spiritually discerned, are so revealed to the man spiritually renewed and enlightened that he can "judge,"—discern,—all things, while "he himself is judged (discerned, understood) by no man."

In other words, an intelligent, spiritually enlightened, experienced Christian worker is able to read his fellow-men, through and through, in all their mental attitudes and moods, moral character and condition, spiritual impotence and need. He is able to diagnose their physical traits and inheritance; their intellectual limitations and gifts; their moral status, environment, and training; their spiritual apathy or aspiration. This is psychological knowledge and skill of the highest order.

In the sense of *soul-knowledge*—the knowledge of all the intricate workings of the human mind and heart—psychology is impossible without a deep and rich spiritual experience. Without it there are realms of life which one never fathoms, never even suspects. These are the realms where vital religion enters, and the soul finds communion with God. Not to possess this knowledge incapacitates one to interpret, in any deep and fundamental way, the moral condition and spiritual quality of any personality. Never is it so true as in dealing with the innermost secret of the soul, either in ourselves or others, that "in his light we see light." Jesus is

not only the effulgence of God's glory, but, for this very reason, the effulgence of man's glory.

Fundamentally, then, psychology is pneumatology, the most spiritual of all sciences; and, hence, to be a psychologist and at the same time unspiritual or non-religious is a contradiction in terms. An agnostic, in the realm of experimental religion, occupying a chair of Psychology in a higher school of learning, is an affront to human intelligence and need. He who would know man, must know God in whose perfect image man is made. The key to the human heart is won through the renewing and enlightening power of the Holy Spirit. The promise of Jesus is all-inclusive: "When he the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth," and that this truth and all truth is *personal* is evident from the added words, "for he shall take of the things of mine and show them unto you."

The personality of Christ is the key both to the knowledge of God and man, and thus the key that unlocks the secret of all soul life and of truth, for, be it ever remembered, truth is personal, and apart from infinite and perfect personality can never be accurately or fully known. This is as true in the realm of Science and Nature as in religion, for the mathematics of Christianity and astronomy and the truths of the material universe, stand for the Mind, the Personality that is back of all existence.

The interpreter of life must be a vital possessor of life, must know life at its source; for, as the Master himself said: "This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom

thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." To one thus qualified for personal evangelism, by experience of life, and by intimate acquaintance with the Author of life, souls become luminous. Their moods and tempers, their sincerities and self-deceptions, their responsiveness or rebellion, their sense of need or their indifference, and all their varied subtle, sullen, sympathetic, mystic spiritual conditions, are clearly known.

Nothing is more marvelous in the experience of a winner of souls than this power to fathom the secret of another person's life. He is able to unveil his spirit; interpret its moral quality, fathom its purpose, follow with keenest intelligence the intricacies of its gropings and conflicts, and the changing nature of its volitions. To assist a soul in discovering itself, and to guide it from spiritual ignorance to spiritual knowledge, and through struggle and controversy to victory and peace, is the most fascinating, rewarding, masterful, yea, most beneficent and blessed work on earth.

The mental skill, the spiritual intelligence and intuition required in such successful personal evangelism were never more wonderfully illustrated than in the work of one of the most successful evangelists of all time, as recorded in the following chapter.

VIII

THE SKILL OF A GREAT EVANGELIST

IT was the writer's privilege, as a theological student, to follow closely the method, spirit and results of Dwight L. Moody's notable evangelistic campaign in Hartford, Conn., at the time of his greatest effectiveness and renown. He not only studied into the secret of his power as a preacher, but took special pains to get close enough to him in his after meetings to gain an intimate knowledge of his method and skill in personal work. Although he was not technically a scholar, and had had no opportunity for scientific training in psychology, it is no exaggeration to say that few men in the world have had a deeper, keener, truer insight of human nature than he. His intuitive knowledge of men in all classes and conditions of society was surprisingly remarkable. He read men, almost instantly, through and through. He seemed to see the uncovered human soul. His questionings speedily determined whether an inquirer was sincere and genuine or hypocritical and evasive. With astonishing rapidity he could turn a man, mentally and morally, inside out; expose his fallacies, moral inconsistencies, perversions, wilfulness and alienation from God. His work, both psychologically and spiritually, was searching, profound, accurate, masterful.

The secret of his power lay not in his exceptional natural gifts, but in his marvelous spiritual insight, gained from his regenerate experience as a Christian, from his wonderful knowledge of the Bible, and from his intimate and prolonged study of the innermost life of his fellow-men. By his skill as a personal worker and winner of men he demonstrated the inseparable unity of the mental and moral life, and that it is impossible, in any profound and accurate sense, to know a man mentally without first knowing his moral status, and his relation to the character and will of God.

This lesson is one of D. L. Moody's most notable contributions to the religious life of his generation. He demonstrated, experimentally, the unity of man in all the attributes of his personality, and in all the activities of his mental, moral and spiritual being. He proved the indissoluble partnership of the mental and moral life, and that psychology is superficial and inadequate except as it is based on the deeper insights of spiritual knowledge and experience (pneumatology). In other words, the moral and spiritual life are so linked up with the mental that a knowledge of the former is essential to a thorough and worthy knowledge of the latter. Mr. Moody fathomed the mental processes of his fellow-men because, with an almost infallible accuracy, he could discern the motives, moral character and spiritual conditions that lay back of them.

This deeper psychology accounts for the thoroughness and permanence of his work. Appearances did not deceive him. Wealth, learning and external cul-

ture did not mislead or intimidate him. He could say to any man of eminence, if not confessedly and vitally a Christian, as Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." He was so deeply versed in the subtleties, pride and self-deceptions of the human heart that he knew its strange, inherent, fatal alienation from the will of God, apart from the renewing and creative work of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus defined as regenerative or the "new birth." As a result, people converted under his preaching experienced a radical moral revolution, through the creative power of a genuine spiritual renewal. Mr. Moody gave a new vitality to the religious life of his generation in two continents, and his name will stand permanently among the greatest spiritual leaders of modern history.

To know men is better than to know books on psychology. One hour at close grips with an inquiring, or agnostic, or rebellious, or skeptical soul will teach one more of the inner workings of the human mind and spirit than can ever be learned from the mere study of a technical science. The more of accurate scholarship the better, but lacking the illumination of spirit which comes through the processes of spiritual renewal, the ablest mind is incapable of fathoming the true status of the human soul.

The Church can never lose its hold on these vital realities without loss of its renewing and transforming power. There are phases of modern church life that are very assuring—the growing breadth and heartiness of its fraternal spirit, its organized activities, its enlarging benevolence, its increasing con-

sciousness of its spiritual deficiencies. Other phases of its life, however, call for serious and prayerful study—its failure to deepen the devotional and spiritual life of its members, its neglect of family worship, its spiritual barrenness as seen in its inability to reproduce an able and adequate ministry, its loss of conviction as to the necessity of a universal human redemption, its avoidance of the New Testament doctrine of sin, of the cross, and of the new birth.

The passion for souls that gave birth to the great reformers and evangelists of the past, from Paul to Luther, from Luther to Knox, Wesley and Whitefield, and from Whitefield to D. L. Moody, that inspired the majestic hymnology of the Church, that created modern missions, and sent the throb of divine love into all lands through countless heralds of the cross, is the passion that can never die if the Church is to live and penetrate all human institutions with its moral ideals, its spiritual energy, its recreative and saving power.

Jesus' personality has indeed become the center of human thought as in no former age, but in spite of this its recent teaching is not laying emphasis where he laid it, on the universal sinfulness of man and the need of divine grace for his salvation. The church of to-day can recover its spiritual vision and its passion for souls only by putting the third chapter of John's gospel at the very forefront of its preaching. The heart of Christ's teaching is here. Here the story of man's need and of God's redeeming love is best told. Here from Jesus' own lips

came the glad promise of the Holy Spirit's renewing and saving work.

Add these deeper truths, convictions and experiences to the splendid organization, equipment and enterprise of the church of to-day and it would sweep round the world with resistless power. Other institutions and agencies, even in the political and commercial world, would bow to its moral supremacy and leadership. The enlightened and redeemed nations would acknowledge the folly and crime of war, the wickedness and failure of unrighteousness, hatred and strife in every realm of life, and the prayer taught by the Divine Master would be answered in the coming of His Kingdom and the doing of His will here on earth as it is done in heaven.

IX

SOUL-WINNING AS AN ART

A Chapter Especially for Pastors

CAPACITY to approach people of every class and condition; utterly diverse in temperament, training, inheritance and moral character, and accurately interpret them, making them acquainted with their own spiritual needs and winning them to a complete and hearty acceptance of the truth as it is in Jesus, is not only an art, but a gift. Some people are incapacitated by nature for so keen and delicate a task. They lack temperamental ability to read men. No amount of training could give them psychological skill. Others are endued with a subtle intuition that can penetrate to the secret of another's thought, purpose, character. This skill is essential to eminent success in the practice of medicine. The physician who would accurately diagnose disease must be able to read his patient through and through, taking into account all the subtle differences of inheritance, nervous temperament and mental moods. To become a masterly salesman one must be able, in like manner, to adjust himself to all the unique and diverse characteristics of the men he meets in travel and trade. A teacher is an affliction to a generation of young people in school or college who cannot distinguish with an infallible

and loving sympathy the different natures upon which he works. He should be able to deal with each pupil on the basis of his own individual temperament, mental endowment, natural tastes and tendencies.

But if an intuitive skill, that can penetrate to the secret of another's individuality, is essential to these so-called secular vocations, what shall be said of the need of it in the divine art of ministering to the deepest needs of the soul. *More than a natural gift is imperative here.* The human spirit that would become masterful in dealing with the innermost life of one's fellow-men must receive special enduement from on high. There is such a thing as a divine illumination through the power and in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul affirmed this special enduement when he said: "We received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth."

A person thus gifted by nature and endued by the Spirit soon acquires exceptional skill in dealing with the intricate problems and perplexities of the human soul. Practice rapidly perfects him in the art of soul guidance and soul winning. He develops an alertness of mind unknown in any other of his mental processes. The desire for conquest in this keen process of mental co-operation, competition or controversy; the intense eagerness of Christian love to save the reluctant or inquiring soul; the passion of Christ in him which makes him affectionately per-

sistent in seeking and saving that which is lost, operate on his mind and heart like an inspiration from on high. Who shall say that in such ardent personal evangelism one is not specially guided, illuminated, empowered by the Holy Spirit. He certainly is lifted above his ordinary vision and ability in such heart to heart work. His mind springs to its task with the conscious strength and assurance of the athlete. It anticipates every inquiry and want of the seeker after truth, and every objection of the one who is resisting the claims of the Master and the leadings of the Holy Spirit. Conscious power, a growing sense of spiritual intelligence and masterfulness, increasing accuracy of intuition, as well as an ever-increasing joy in the work, are the sure rewards of persistence and fidelity in the effort to win souls to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.

Faithful, persistent, universally applied pastoral work makes a far more profound spiritual impression on a community than the most earnest preaching. The best audience a soul-winner can have is an audience of one. Every word then has directness and meaning. It cannot be evaded. If an impenitent man comes to feel that you are ceaselessly anxious about his spiritual condition, he cannot avoid becoming anxious about himself. Half the battle is won when a person becomes solicitous concerning his own spiritual welfare. He is then accessible to the influence of the Holy Spirit, which up to this moment of concern, he has either ignored or resisted. As John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus,

so any wise and worthy Christian may be the forerunner of the Holy Spirit to an unconverted and impenitent soul. By his own approach and appeal, he prepares the way of the Lord.

Such pastoral work, if wisely and faithfully done, begets universal respect and love on the part of the people. They soon discover that their minister is their best friend, devoted soul and body to their highest good. His views modify or become their views. They begin to see through his eyes, and to feel the pulse-beat of his spiritual life. The sentiment of an entire community thus gradually and unconsciously changes. The conviction becomes prevalent that religion is after all a very vital thing, and that a person must (to use a time-worn phrase) *experience religion* if he would enter the kingdom of heaven. In other words, it is possible by persistent and wisely conducted pastoral work to create throughout an entire community the conviction that every man, woman and child in the community needs to be saved. The supreme difficulty in a great city is to create this community impression. The smaller the parish the greater the opportunity for personal work, and thus the greater the possibility of a widespread popular conviction of need. The young man who desires to step at once into a city pastorate is likely to lose the supreme opportunity of his life for spiritual effectiveness and growth, and for mastering a knowledge of men and the truth that will transform and redeem them. Next to the diligent study of God's Word, the most rewarding work in the world is the diligent study of the spiritual state of individual men. It

marvelously quickens the intellect, compels directness and clearness of statement, teaches one how to make truth personal, acts as a tonic to faith, aids better than all the commentaries in the world in the interpretation of the Bible, brings into clear vision all the secret conditions and processes of the human soul, makes preaching personal, passionate, prophetic.

Five years of this specific personal evangelism prepared an entire community for a deep and far-reaching work of grace. No eminent evangelist was needed to secure a revival. The revival, anticipated by no one, was gradually taking place in the minds and hearts of the people. It only required the calling of the community together for extra services during the annual week of prayer in mid-winter, to give this latent popular feeling a chance to blossom into vital expression in public confession and definite religious choice and action. It became a veritable Pentecost, coming down quietly and effectively, upon half a township. Blizzards, snow-drifts and zero weather could not keep the people from flocking to the house of God. Scores and hundreds were converted. It was no wave of superficial sentiment, but a deep and quiet work of grace, due to an intelligent consideration of life's fundamental problems in the light of God's Word and the teachings of Jesus Christ. Whole households, including grandparents, parents and children, gave themselves in prayer to God and made public confession of their faith. The adult population, as well as practically all the young people, gave evidence of genuine conversion and spiritual renewal. People in the seventies and in the

eighties, and one aged person of ninety-two, came as little children to the Lord's table and made confession of Christ as their Saviour. Family altars sprang up, under pastoral guidance and help, in many homes. Saloons and places of cheap amusement were closed through lack of patronage. The moral tone of society changed. The wholesome effect was apparent to surrounding communities. Visitors and traveling salesmen exclaimed at the moral transformation of the people. The prevalent skepticism of the former generation silently disappeared as snow dissolves under the genial warmth of the returning sun. Two village churches each added nearly one hundred to their membership. The regenerating effect of this work of grace was permanent in the lives of individuals and in the township at large. The religious lapses that follow many revivals did not, in any known instance, occur. The power of the Holy Spirit was so manifest in this marvelous movement and in the lives of the people that lifelong skeptics made acknowledgment of its divine reality. After nearly four decades the fruitage of that spiritual harvest is still visible in the community, and the work of grace then wrought was duplicated in a similar revival twenty years later.

The opportunities that come to a Christian worker in such a widespread movement are innumerable, and the experience gained in close spiritual converse with households and individuals furnishes an ideal and a demonstration, and becomes a spiritual asset that directs and strengthens the work of all the subsequent years.

X

THE EVANGELISM OF THE APOSTLES

THE apostles learned their evangelism from Jesus. Before they were at all qualified for their work he found it necessary to impress upon them, by oft-repeated instruction, many fundamental truths which they were slow to comprehend:

1. *The infinite worth of the human soul.* Common humanity had never been appreciated until Jesus came. He told his disciples that no material wealth, however great, could for one moment compare in value with a single human life, and that if a man should gain the whole world and lose his soul he had lost everything.

2. *The inestimable value of a child.* So little did the chosen twelve appreciate the spiritual worth and possibilities of young children that they indignantly refused to let parents bring them to Jesus, and he was compelled to rebuke them with great severity, saying: "Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." "It would be far better to be drowned in the depths of the sea than cause one of these little ones to stumble."

3. *The need of ceaseless and intimate spiritual union with Christ.* "Abide in me." "Without me ye can do nothing."

4. *The need of a special enduement of power through the baptism and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.* They were not to venture forth upon their apostolic career until they had received this enduement.

Equipped with these instructions and assurances of divine aid, the apostles began their work with supernatural power. Conscious, after long discipline and oft-repeated failure, of their spiritual impotence, they waited in prayer for the promise of the Father. Pentecost was its fulfillment. Energized in mind and spirit, from on high, they preached the love and power of the risen Christ with flaming tongues and passionate hearts. Their testimony in a score of different languages and their eloquent preaching stirred Jerusalem from center to circumference. Thousands were converted, on that first wondrous day, to the new faith and entered the membership of the newly organized church. They did personal work everywhere, even in prison, making a convert of the jailer and his entire family.

Even before Pentecost, soon after receiving their call to discipleship, the apostles were instructed in these effective methods of work. They were sent out, two by two, on extended missions of instruction and soul-winning. They were commissioned by Jesus to go from house to house, from city to city, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom. They must be ready for suffering and sacrifice, and even for

martyrdom, and must be bold to confess their Lord before rulers and men everywhere. By teaching, preaching, and personal appeal they were to win disciples of all nations. The chosen twelve were themselves, in the very origin and constitution of their apostolic band, a striking illustration of the power of personal work. They had won each other, one by one, to an acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus. Disciples multiplied through the zeal and personal witness of those who had found the secret of the new life.

The apostles who began their ministry in Jerusalem and extended it to all the regions round about, Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee, ultimately became world-evangelists. Their original commission necessitated missionary enterprise on a widely extended scale. They were to make disciples of all nations, going even to the uttermost parts of the earth. If tradition can be trusted, they did this with great heroism and sacrifice: Peter carried the gospel to Rome, John to Asia Minor, Thomas to India, Andrew to Scythia, Philip to Phrygia, Bartholomew to Parthia, Matthew to Ethiopia and possibly Macedonia, and Thaddeus to Syria. The very existence of these traditions, even if they cannot all be verified, proves the far-reaching influence and work of these divinely commissioned men. But the work thus dimly outlined in the apocryphal writings of the early Christian centuries became, in the apostolic career of Paul, a majestic historic certainty. His evangelistic ministry covered, in three prolonged and extended tours, the principal cities and provinces of western

Asia, Macedonia, and Greece, culminating in Rome, the renowned capital of the world.

As regards method, theme, spirit and aim, Paul is the pattern for all effective and ideal evangelism. Never a man had a greater devotion to Christ, a surer intellectual grasp of the processes and principles of spiritual experience and redemption, a profounder experimental knowledge of the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, or a greater passion for souls. He was a constructive statesman in the Kingdom of God, a brilliant and masterful expounder of Christian truth, a philosopher, prophet, and seer. He used voice and pen alike in instruction and personal appeal. He traversed continents to win men to Christ; he wrote letters to individuals and churches to instruct them in doctrine and in the principles of Christian living; his one theme was, "Jesus Christ, and him crucified," and his one aim, to save men and penetrate society and all human institutions with the teachings and spirit of his Master. He was as ardent, enthusiastic, and happy in making a Christian convert of young Timothy as in establishing a church in some great metropolis. He gave himself as wholeheartedly to saving a runaway slave as in founding Christian communities in Ephesus, Colossae, Corinth, or Rome.

Back of the constructive processes of the modern centuries in Europe, and in all this western hemisphere, lie the spiritual passion and constructive statesmanship of the great apostle. The currents of life that flowed in such mighty volume from his consecrated soul are still sweeping around the world with

ever-increasing momentum. Apostolic evangelism made modern history, and just in proportion as the preachers, teachers, and apostles of to-day proclaim the same redemptive gospel, and have the same passion for saving men and reconstructing society according to the principles and purpose of Jesus, the world will go on in its progress toward the ultimate perfection and brotherhood of the Kingdom of God.

PART II
A SPIRITUAL CLINIC

Some Notable Conversions and Experiences

XI

THE MIRACLE OF REGENERATION

NO facts in physical science are more capable of indisputable demonstration than the spiritual miracle of the new birth. Jesus compared the mysterious process to the invisible wind, "which bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The unseen wind is heard, its tremendous power felt, and its effects definitely known; and just as definitely does the invisible work of God's creative Spirit become manifest in the outward life of all who are vitally renewed and transformed by His power. Regeneration is not a natural process, but a supernatural. This can be better illustrated in actual life than in the clearest attempt at verbal description.

During the remarkable revival referred to in a preceding chapter, which changed the moral and religious character of an entire community, a certain man resisted with bitterness and anger the influences, human and divine, that were pressing upon his mind,

heart and conscience for decision. He was a man of business and social standing in the village, being treasurer of the local bank, postmaster, and also proprietor of a substantial store. He had a devoted wife and two beautiful boys; yet for some hidden reason was antagonistic to and rebellious against the truth that sought his conversion.

At the close of an exceptionally impressive service, in which mature men and women were giving themselves to God, he said to his pastor: "I wish you would never speak to me on the subject of religion again." The latter replied: "We do not intend to bore you with this matter, but you tremendously need God, and we shall not cease to pray for your salvation."

Not long after this, this man suddenly disappeared. Not even his wife and most intimate friends knew where he had gone. His affairs were put in the hands of a receiver. It was found that he had embezzled money from the bank of which he was treasurer, from the post-office under his care, and that he had also borrowed substantial sums from friends who confided in his integrity. In all he had absconded with a total of several thousand dollars. After a month of investigation his business was declared bankrupt. His whereabouts remained unknown, and owing to the strange silence and mystery, it was suspected that he might have committed suicide.

This experience, so utterly distressing to his family and friends, continued for about six weeks, when all unexpectedly he returned. He came directly to his pastor and unburdened his heart in a full and frank

confession. He had escaped to Canada, in order to avoid capture and the clutch of the law. One night, oppressed with the burden of his sin and guilt, he passed a store in which he saw an illuminated motto with words which said in substance, "All sin may be forgiven." Like the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, their message brought instant conviction to his wayward and rebellious soul. He hastened to his hotel room, fell on his knees, and gave himself to God. The next morning he bought a railroad ticket and started for home. As just related, he first went to his pastor, fully aware that the one who had so persistently sought his salvation was, next to God and his devoted wife, his best friend. He unbosomed the full story of his wrong. The battle in his soul had been so fierce that, as he said, "it was either surrender or suicide, and he decided to surrender."

He voluntarily came before the Church committee, made the same unreserved confession, and asked the privilege of uniting with the Church and publicly acknowledging Christ as his Saviour. No one objected to such action except the man who had audited his accounts and was fully conversant with the nature and extent of his wrongdoing. He found it impossible to believe in his sincerity and in the genuineness of his conversion, suspecting that he was taking this course in order to avoid the penalties of the law. It was evident, however, to the other members of the committee that the Spirit of God had wrought his wondrous miracle of renewal and change in this

man's life, and that he should be cordially received into the fellowship of Christian believers.

Results proved the wisdom of this decision, as well as the mighty power of God in re-creating the inner life of a penitent soul. For twenty years he remained in the community to witness to the reality of this supernatural work. The change in his spirit, temper and quality of life, in his relation to God and man, was so remarkable; the genuineness of his religious experience so universally recognized, that it was not long before he was reinstated in the full confidence of his fellow-townsmen. In due time he was elected superintendent of the Sunday School and deacon of the very church in which he had manifested such antagonism to the truth and to the Spirit of God. What is even more remarkable, his former business associates and friends, who had known of his embezzlements, expressed their undoubted confidence in his regeneration and in the integrity of his Christian character by again electing him treasurer of the bank that he had defrauded, and postmaster of the office that he had robbed.

Until the day of his death he was a living witness to the wonders and power of that miracle which Jesus said was the fundamental necessity of the human heart, and which he defined in the familiar words: "Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Such reconstructions of human life are not possible by any natural process or power. When one is actually "born again" he is "not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but

of God"; or, as other Scripture puts it, he is "begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

Sometimes a generation wearies of the terminology of former generations, and in doing so unwittingly reacts from the truth embodied in the earlier manner of speech. To many "regeneration" is such an outworn and theologically abused term, yet it is one of the great classic words that has no modern equivalent, no worthy and adequate substitute. Whether the Church retains this time-honoured term or its literal counterpart, "born again," it must ever keep the truth contained therein, vital in its faith and spiritual work. Men lose their passion for humanity when they lose confidence in the reality and in the universal necessity of this wondrous miracle of grace.

"Except one be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

XII

STORMING THE CITADEL OF THE WILL

CONVERSION in the case of a mature person is the voluntary action of the will. It is a deliberate turning, choice, decision, surrender, acceptance. The heart that has resisted says, "I will." It is no superficial emotion or desire, but a fundamental and determined purpose. It is putting Jesus Christ on the throne of one's being. It is the obedience of man's will to God's will; the acceptance of the lifelong guidance and authority of the Holy Spirit as He speaks to the soul through the inspired Word. It is the summoning of one's entire mind, heart, and spirit to an unreserved and permanent allegiance to Jesus Christ as Saviour, Lord, and Master.

Conversion is thus the most supreme act of self-mastery known to human experience. No man knows the meaning of self-conquest until he has himself well enough in hand to say "I will" to God's call, command, invitation, and ideal. This act of self-command involves the surrender of all known evil, potentially and by voluntary choice. It is not a half-hearted or partial process. It is the renunciation of everything known to be contrary to God's righteous will. It challenges every form of self-love and love of the world. It is a fundamental reversal and over-

turning of all the tendencies of the unsanctified mind and heart. And this is why conversion is often so long delayed and resisted, and the longer it is postponed the more self-reliant and insubordinate becomes the human will.

No battlefield in the world calls for such heroism, strength, struggle, and self-command as the battlefield of the human soul in the process of conversion. He who conquers here can face any foe and endure any martyrdom. When the issues have become clear and decision imperative, the spiritual conflict is a splendid, awful fight for one's soul, manhood, life.

A certain individual, intimately known by the writer, who illustrated conspicuously and characteristically this conflict of the will, was in the mature strength of an exceptionally vigorous manhood. He was no subordinate in a large business, but accustomed to command and to have men do his bidding without questioning or delay. His energy was the moving power of the whole vast enterprise. He was not accustomed to take orders from any one, and when it came to the question of accepting the authority of Jesus Christ as promptly and fully as he expected others to accept his, it was found to be no easy process. However, at the beginning he was not aware of the secret of his difficulty.

After years of intimacy and introductory personal work, his pastor visited his home one Sunday afternoon determined, if possible, with the help of God, to secure a definite decision. His initial words were these: "Mr. ———, you are a clear-cut business man and always come directly to the point in every

business transaction, and I want to put to you a very direct and personal question—'Why are you not a Christian?' He replied, 'I do not know.'" This seemed strange for so intelligent a man, clean in his moral life, perfectly upright in business, a regular attendant at church, and a man who had been trained from childhood religiously. It was evident that he must interpret the man's inner life to himself. The following questions and answers followed in rapid succession:

"Do you believe in a personal God, to whom you owe worship and obedience?" "Most certainly I do."

"Do you believe in Jesus Christ as God's beloved Son sent to be the Saviour of the world?" "Yes."

"Do you believe that you are, like all the rest of us, a sinner and need Christ as your personal Saviour?" "Yes."

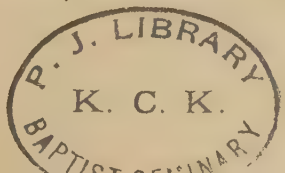
"Have you accepted Him definitely and consciously as your Saviour?" "No, I do not think I have."

"Why not?" "I do not know."

"Do you not think it is necessary to come to a definite choice and decision in this matter?" "Certainly I do."

"Why not make that definite decision now?" "I am not ready."

"Your answer lets one into the secret of your whole difficulty; your trouble lies in your will. You are not letting God have His way in your life. Jesus said: 'If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or



whether I speak of Myself.' You are accustomed to give orders and be obeyed; you are not willing to take orders and obey, even though they come from your Divine Lord and Master. You can never be a Christian and enjoy the comfort, hope, and satisfaction of the Christian until you say 'I will' to God. Your whole trouble lies in the unwillingness of your will."

He answered: "I see it clear as day. You have hit the very center of my trouble."

"In a business transaction, when you see a thing as clearly as that, you act with great promptness and decision. Will you be as businesslike now, and say right here and now, 'I will' to the will of God." He replied with a courteous but clean-cut and positive negative, "No!"

"Why not?" "I am not ready."

"Will you not kneel with me and let me pray that God may make you willing?" Again he replied, "No!"

"Will you not, then, promise that before you retire to-night you will yourself kneel and ask God to make you willing?" "No, I will not promise."

"Why not?" "That would settle the whole business."

If a person wishes to study psychology, fathom the secrets of the moral will, follow the intricate processes of the human spirit in its dealing with eternal issues, he gains his supreme opportunity in such an experience as this. This man of iron will held this personal question at arm's length for two whole years. Every moment of that time he knew that he

was deliberately holding God off from the control of his life. During this entire period he was thoroughly aware that he was taking great chances, considering the uncertainties of life, and that he ought to give his heart to God.

The two years passed. A deep work of grace visited the city through the united work of the churches and the able preaching of a skilful evangelist. It came over him that he could not trifle with this question of his soul's salvation longer, and he decided in his own home that, if the opportunity for public decision came, he would be the first on his feet, whatever the message might be or whether he was the only one to respond. True to his purpose, he was the first of many to give himself publicly to God, and when it was his pastor's privilege to grasp his hand in the joy of deep gratitude and congratulation, his first word of response was this: "You are responsible for it."

Such is the reward that comes from persistent, prayerful, loving, Scriptural work in behalf of individual souls. The highest rewards and the deepest happiness are the enduring fruitage of such effort. It was an untold privilege to receive this converted man into the Church. He gave the first weeks of his new life in Christ to telling the story of God's grace to unconverted friends. He came at once to the front in the activities of his Church, and for years has been a leading member of the Board of Trustees and Board of Deacons, and a strong financial giver to its support.

His entire career since conversion is striking evi-

dence that in adult life the whole process of vital and saving religion begins with and hinges upon an intelligent and decisive act of the will. This citadel of power must be surrendered to God. Jesus Christ must be invited, without reservation, to occupy the throne of one's moral being and reign without a rival there.

> "Our wills are ours, we know not how;
> Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

XIII

THE BATTLE OF THE SOUL

SPIRITUAL conflict and conversion is not confined to mature manhood. Boys and girls who understand the nature of the Christian life and what full allegiance to Jesus Christ signifies, experience the same struggle of soul as older people in the matter of decision. The odds against them are, indeed, not as great, but proportionate to their years the battle is just as strenuous. At times it becomes a fierce fight for the soul, even in young people religiously trained.

The experience of an earnest boy of fourteen vividly and beautifully illustrates this battling of the soul for life. He had back of him the piety, faith, prayers and instructions of wise, Christian parents. The church had been helpful in its teachings and influence. Through these agencies he came to a clear sense of his spiritual need. A time of exceptional religious interest brought the question of decision to definite issue. He was fully aware that the time had come for him to decide what kind of a man he ought and wanted to be.

One can become intimately and sympathetically acquainted with the inner life of young people only as he knows the strenuousness of the mental, moral and spiritual conflicts through which they pass in

the years which bridge the space between childhood and young manhood and womanhood. The wisest and most tender guidance is needed through these years of inner storm and stress.

During the after meeting of an impressive evening service the earnest boy in question had a personal interview with his pastor. He was under deep conviction of his need and duty. In the quiet and trustful relationship of the private conference his pastor said to him: "It is very evident that the Holy Spirit is working in your heart, seeking to lead you to give your life to God. Are you not ready to take Christ as your Saviour and from this day on to live for him?" He replied: "I cannot." "Why not?" His exact and startling answer, for one so young, was this: "It is a fight with the devil and with myself." His face was pale through the strenuousness of his inner conflict.

"My dear boy, if what you say is true, you cannot afford to go out of this meeting to-night defeated."

Over and over again he affirmed his inability to decide.

"Let us, then, kneel," said his pastor, "and pray that God may give you the victory over yourself and over the great enemy of your soul. Your only hope and strength in this hour of need is in Him. Let us each pray, in turn, that He may enable you to decide this matter now."

On his knees the victory was won, and when he rose he exclaimed with a note of triumph: "I will."

The inner change at once became visible in his

outer life. A smile of new happiness was on his face, his head was erect with the consciousness of a new manhood, and in look, manner and speech it was evident that a deep and fundamental transformation had taken place in his moral and spiritual life. From that hour to mature manhood a life of steady fidelity and growing strength confirmed the genuineness and thoroughness of his conversion. Years after, in a chance meeting with his early pastor on a railway train, he said: "Do you remember that evening we spent together in the church, when I made my decision for Christ?"

"Most vividly, to the minutest detail," was the reply.

"That was the turning point in my life," he said. "The decision I made then was the making of me. I now have a happy Christian home, a family altar, and we are giving our children Christian instruction daily, and in addition I am doing all that I can as an officer in the church to make its work a blessing to the community in which we live."

A chief defect and difficulty in many a professedly religious life and experience is that the work of conversion was not thoroughly done. The choice of Christ meant little beyond the conception and acceptance of an ethical ideal. The issue between Him and the world, between holiness and sin, between self-will and the will of God, was not made definite and clear. For this reason people are often received into church membership who never fought to a finish the spiritual conflict that proved so strenuous in the experience of this resolute boy, and who

are consequently troubled with a sense of indefiniteness and insecurity as to the genuineness of the religious life. They miss that deep and satisfying joy which comes from the assurance of forgiven sin, and of being in consciously right relations with God. In many instances church officials themselves seem to have lost the conviction of the necessity of that fundamental and revolutionary experience which Jesus termed the *new birth,* and which he made a condition of entrance to the kingdom of heaven.

A philosophy of religious experience has come into vogue in recent years that cancels the line of demarcation between the saved and the unsaved. The whole process is treated as a natural evolution rather than as one of intelligent moral choice. Under wise religious instruction and guidance a child may become a Christian without ever knowing the time of his spiritual renewal, but no greater wrong can be done one who has reached the age of mature self-determination than to receive him into church membership while he is still uncertain as to his fundamental attitude to Jesus Christ. A professedly Christian experience that has never known a spiritual conflict or a battle of the moral will, is necessarily unacquainted with the vital issues and the vital nature of the Christian life. It is as Jesus said, "If a man *willeth to do his will* he shall know of the teaching, whether it is from God, or whether I speak from myself." Clear issues at the beginning of the Christian life save one from superficiality, indefiniteness and disappointment later on.

XIV

THE EVOLUTION OF A NORMAL CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

A DEVOTED teacher in the Sunday School found it necessary to give up her class. Without consulting the superintendent, her girls, about fourteen years of age, asked a certain estimable and attractive young lady to become their teacher. She consented, even though she was not a member of the church. Discovering the situation, the superintendent came to his pastor and said: "I am in a difficult and embarrassing position, these girls have secured Miss M. as their teacher, and she is not a Christian, and cannot give them the help and spiritual instruction they need. What shall I do?" He answered: "Miss M. is a young lady of serious mind and purpose. She has evidently assumed this responsibility with serious intent. She will soon discover her need and either give up her class or become a Christian."

"You have greatly relieved my mind," said the superintendent, "I will let matters rest awhile and see how the case develops."

Exactly as predicted, the new teacher, in about six weeks, came to her pastor and said: "I find that I cannot lead my girls to Christ unless I know Christ."

"Do you wish to know Him, and become His true disciple?" "I do," she replied, "that is why I have come to see you to-day." After stating as clearly as possible the nature of the Christian life, and that it was a complete yielding of her will to the will of Jesus as her sovereign Lord and Master, and an unreserved, complete, joyful and trustful abandonment of her life to the guidance of the Divine Spirit as revealed in the teachings of the inspired Word, she was asked if she was ready to accept Christ on these terms. She unhesitatingly responded in the affirmative. Her decision was definite and discriminating.

Nothing was then said about a public profession of her faith, in order to avoid confusion of issues and the seeming identification of church membership with Christian experience. She went forth as one relieved of a heavy burden, spiritually emancipated, happy, joyously free.

Again, in another six weeks, she called at the parsonage to talk over the problems that had been working in her mind. "I have been thinking," she said, "that it is my duty as a Christian to make a public confession of my faith in Christ and unite with the Church, but there are certain things that I do and enjoy and see no harm in that some Christians look upon with disapproval, and I do not want to subject myself to criticism or to being misunderstood. Under these circumstances, what is best for me to do?"

"When you began the Christian life," she was

asked, "did you expect to be a growing Christian?"

"Yes."

"Do you *desire* to be a growing Christian?"

"Yes, most assuredly."

"When you accepted Christ as your Saviour, did you also accept him as your Light, 'the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world?'"

"Yes."

"Are you willing to receive and welcome light as it comes to you on the various problems of character and conduct?"

"Yes, if I know my own heart, I am."

"Your only course, then, is to go forward at once and unite with the Church. You have only one Master, and that is Christ. Your conscience must be subject to him and to him alone in all these intricate life problems. If there is anything questionable in the things to which you have referred you will ultimately be assured of it, under his guidance. The Church cannot be conscience for you, nor your pastor, nor any earthly advisor or friend."

Thus relieved in mind and heart, with the nature and philosophy of the Christian life made intelligible and clear, she at once united with the Church, and was exceptionally happy in her decision.

Another six weeks passed. Again she made a confidant of her pastor: "I want to tell you something; for some time I have been a member of a club that meets weekly on a certain evening. That is the evening of our church prayer meeting. It soon became evident to me that I, as a Christian and a church member, must choose between the club and

the prayer meeting; and now I have given up the club altogether. Moreover, I have somehow lost my relish for what I once thought so essential to my enjoyment."

No finer or more beautiful illustration could be given of the normal processes of Christian discovery and growth. The secret of Protestant Christianity lies in its power to secure spiritual intelligence, freedom from conscience, and capacity for initiative and self-government under the guidance of the Spirit, in the individual Christian. The Church can never legislate for the individual believer. The disciple of the Master has no human or ecclesiastical authority with any right of sovereignty over the realm of his inner life; no Pontiff to prescribe laws or dictate terms. Christ makes all true disciples of his kings and priests unto God, forever, and the only secret of a successful Christian life is to be absolutely subject to his will in all things in order to be absolutely free in the realm of intelligent and divinely ordered self-government.

The young lady whose experience has just been given soon became one of the most devoted and effective leaders in her church. Her entire influence was religiously constructive and spiritually vital, and all because she was supremely loyal to her Divine Master in every choice and decision, beginning with and following her acceptance of His sovereignty over her innermost life.

XV

THE CONVERSION OF A MORALIST

THE Bible has truth suited to every kind of mental and moral need. One's chief reliance in meeting such need is the Word of God, which is "living and active," and which, like a two-edged sword, "pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and is quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." No class of persons is more difficult to reach, and to bring to contrition and a sense of spiritual need, than that of the Moralist who for years, possibly a lifetime, has wrapped himself securely and contentedly in a mantle of self-righteousness. He seems utterly impervious to truth. Secure behind the fortress of his own integrity he resists and resents the imputation that he still lacks, like the rich young ruler, the one thing needful.

The experience of such a man is here recorded. He was approximately three score years and ten. He prided himself on his clean moral life and his right relations to his fellow-men. He compared himself favourably with professing Christians, and justly so as regards his outward conduct and deed. He had been brought up in the Universalist faith, and like all men of that creed who believe that all men are to be saved, he gradually lost sight of the

grace that saves. He was sufficient unto himself. He did, indeed, acknowledge the superlative goodness of the Christian life, but his apparent humility only served to reveal a moral pride and self-esteem that resented every suggestion of moral unworthiness even in the presence of God's infinite perfection. Argument was useless; human effort of no avail.

One day his pastor, with New Testament in hand, had a chat with him over his garden fence. He gave expression to his deep solicitude, and his conviction that his elderly friend needed a new vision of the grace of God as revealed in the love and sacrifice of Jesus. Instead of arguing with him about the great doctrines of the Christian faith, he asked the privilege of reading to him the opening verses of the tenth chapter of Romans, which is the most marvelous passage on self-righteousness in the Bible. He pictured to him Paul's solicitude for his countrymen who were outwardly righteous, but still unacquainted with the character, grace and will of God: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is *that they may be saved*. For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, *but not according to knowledge*. For they *being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth.*" The words italicized were emphasized and interpreted in the reading. They proved the Spirit's message to the self-righteous man's soul. They convicted him of lifelong sin in ignoring and dishonour-

ing God. They made him conscious of a great moral defect and need. They revealed to him, with overwhelming power, the perfect righteousness of Christ, and his own unsaved condition. They tarried in his mind until they melted him to penitence and shame.

A few days later, his pastor, feeling that a crisis had come in the old man's life, called upon him. The latter met him at the door, and even before the morning greeting could be given, with tears in his eyes, he said, "I want to find Jesus." When the nature of the Christian life was thoroughly explained, and the way of confession and acceptance made clear, he joyfully knelt in prayer and gave himself with glad eagerness to God. That very day he established a family altar, and the life that for seventy years had been prayerless was changed to a life of earnest and intelligent daily devotion. He at once found himself, also, in a relation of spiritual intimacy and unity, of spiritual acquaintance and companionship with his Christian wife, that he had never known or even suspected as possible. He made the sad discovery that for a lifetime his religious agnosticism had shut him out of the sweetest joys and richest experiences that true marriage and a religious home can ever know. He did his best to atone for this ignorance and neglect. He made a public confession of his new-found faith, united with the Church, and for a goodly number of years lived to witness to the transforming power of God's grace in the life of a true believer.

XVI

A FALSE AND OBSTRUCTIVE HUMILITY

TO adjust one's self to all kinds of temperaments and satisfy all varieties of mental and spiritual need is a supremely fine art. The study of the inner life of personalities under the inspiration of the evangelical motive and passion develops intuitive skill, sensitiveness of sympathy, and tactfulness and winsomeness in personal approach.

A man of vital religious experience, somewhat past middle life, had never publicly acknowledged himself as a Christian. Self-depreciating, and possessed of an exceptionally retiring disposition and an over-sensitive conscience, he shrank from any act that seemed like assuming special attainment in Christian character or knowledge. Notwithstanding his extreme diffidence, he daily conducted the family devotions, impelled by a high sense of Christian duty. The courage which overcame his natural reticence was the product of a religious inheritance and training in the most spiritually intelligent and God-fearing home in the community. It was, however, seemingly impossible for him to break through the reserve of his shrinking modesty and step out, publicly, into the joyous freedom of liberty in Christ. His difficulty came, not from any uncertainty as to the genuineness of his religious experience, but from (to his

sensitive mind) the appalling significance of the word "profession" as it was used in the terminology of the Church in his earlier years. To him the word was forbidding and repellent because of its seeming assumption of exceptional attainment and worthiness. "Profession," to him, was little else than boasting of peculiar merit and a superior righteousness. His humility was real, yet painful, misleading and obstructive.

Some new and luminous, not to say startling, way of presenting truth was necessary to shake him out of his lifelong habit of thought and his false conception of public confession.

"Do you really think," he was asked, "that you are so much better than other people that you do not need to acknowledge your need of a Saviour and your dependence on Christ?"

He was almost shocked, if not hurt, by the inquiry, and denied that he had ever entertained such a thought regarding himself.

It was then made clear to him that until a person has acknowledged himself a sinner, in the sight of God and men, by publicly confessing his need of a Redeemer, he is standing before the community in his own name and righteousness, as sufficient unto himself. He is practically saying to his fellow-men that his own goodness, effort and attainment were all that he needs.

The truth flashed upon him with great vividness. It became plain to him that Jesus made *confession* one of the first evidences and requirements of discipleship: "Every one who shall confess me before

men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven."

The refined and sensitive man, in the light of this explanation, saw what he had never seen before, and what many others have never seen, that in the act of public confession, one, for the first time, acknowledges his unworthiness before the world, and ascribes glory to Jesus as the "only name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." From this moment he had an altogether new conception of the Church. Instead of being composed of individuals who considered themselves better than others, veritable "saints," it was composed of those who publicly confessed their moral unworthiness and their dependence upon the mercy and grace of a forgiving God. For the first time in his life he realized that the Church is a *school* for *learners,* and not constituted of people who *profess* to have made superior attainments in knowledge and character; that it is a *hospital* where the spiritually sick and infirm come to be cared for and cured. It dawned upon him that he had been treating the Church as though it were an assembly of boasters, religiously proud and conceited, a "better-than-thou" sort of people, who like the Pharisees of old dishonoured God and despised men, saying, as they drew about them their robes of self-righteousness and religious seclusiveness, "We thank God that we are not as other men are."

It was a revolutionary discovery. This humble, retiring, self-depreciating man, now saw that all unconsciously *he* had been *the seclusive one*, standing before his fellow-men in the attitude of self-suffi-

ciency and self-dependence. He instantly and eagerly sought to remedy the mistake of a lifetime by the immediate public confession of his Christian faith in the act of uniting with the Church. The decision, however, came too late, for on the very Sunday when he hoped to take his first Communion with the people of God he passed away, expressing great grief that he could not make this public testimony to his devotion to Christ before he died. The community, however, was not ignorant of his new-found joy, and was impressed by the decisive purpose of this humble, quiet, retiring, self-depreciating, yet splendidly courageous man.

The loss in this man's religious life could not be attributed so much to a failure in his own purpose and desire, as to the defect in the religious instruction of his childhood days. The terminology of the Church gave a wrong conception of the nature and significance of public confession by the common use of the word "profession"; while its officials rather hindered than helped young people to give public expression to their religious purpose, experience and desire in early years. The entire history of this devout and modest man witnesses to the need of an alert, intelligent, sympathetic evangelism on the part of all who deal with childhood in the home and in the Church, or in any other of the vital and formative relationships of life.

XVII

HONEST DIFFICULTY WITH A CREED

INTELLECTUAL difficulties to belief in a creed usually vanish when moral difficulties are removed. Skepticism is more of the heart than of the head. There are exceptions to this rule. For example, people trained to one system of belief do not easily adjust themselves to the doctrinal teachings of another. It seems inherently impossible for one born and trained a Catholic to absorb Protestantism. Romanism is rarely eradicated from the blood. This is an extreme illustration. Among the Protestant sects there is, at least, the kinship of mental freedom, and on the great doctrines of God, sin, redemption and immortality, a practical unanimity of belief. The differences that divide denominations have to do for the most part with metaphysical, philosophical, or theological discussion of subordinate doctrines, i. e., doctrines not fundamentally essential to salvation, or with such pure externalities as forms and ceremonies, rituals and polities, and the simple method of doing things.

The following experience is a beautiful and instructive illustration of honest intellectual difficulty with the most profound metaphysical problem of Christianity,—the doctrine of the Trinity. The person wrestling with this problem was by birth and

education a Unitarian. She was a woman about 35 years of age, intelligent, thoughtful, devout, religiously earnest, and a thorough believer in Christ as the Redeemer of the world. Although within easy reach of a prominent Unitarian church, she was by preference a regular attendant at another church, where worship was warmly evangelical and the Deity of Christ unhesitatingly proclaimed.

After a year or more of regular fellowship, both at the mid-week prayer meeting as well as at the Sunday services, she was asked if she did not desire to enter into still more vital relations as a member of the church. She replied, "Yes, I would, but I cannot conscientiously subscribe to the first article of your creed. I was brought up a Unitarian, and your creed begins with a statement of your belief in the Trinity."

"What led you, then, to prefer this church to your own?"

"The fact that I find myself, in religious experience, more in harmony with and more vitally related here than to the church of my own faith in the city. Moreover, I am more helped and satisfied in my spiritual life here than there. In all the matters of personal and practical religion I am more truly in fellowship with this church than with the church of my childhood."

"Why, then, not identify yourself with us in church membership?"

"It would, as I said, not be intellectually honest for me to do so, as I cannot conscientiously subscribe to the doctrine of the Trinity."

"Your position can be frankly stated to the church committee and to the people of the church, so that you would be relieved of all subterfuge or inconsistency in the matter."

"Yes, but this would not satisfy my own heart and conscience, for in subscribing to your creed I would still have to make a mental reservation or evasion."

"Do you believe that Jesus Christ is God's well-beloved Son, sent to be the Saviour of the world?"

"Yes, I have no doubt as to that point, but simply as to his equality with the Father,—his standing in the God-head."

"Have you accepted him as your Saviour, just as we accept him to be our Redeemer?"

"Yes, I am sure that I have."

"Your place, then, from every point of view except as regards an intricate, not to say infinite metaphysical problem, which no one can ever adequately fathom, is here and not with the Unitarians. Experimentally you are one with us, and on all matters of doctrine, except the one just referred to, you ought to be with us in permanent church fellowship. We believe confidently in the doctrine of the Trinity and in the Deity of Jesus, not because we have fathomed all the mysteries of that historic doctrine, but because we cannot accept Jesus's teachings regarding himself and the frequent reference to the Trinity in the New Testament without accepting this also. It seems the greater wisdom and reason so to do. Moreover, you have unconsciously paid a tribute to the vital power of this doctrine in ac-

knowledging the greater spiritual vitality of the evangelical faith than of the faith in which you were educated. If it can be made thoroughly plain to our people that you have not yet solved the problem of the doctrine of the Trinity, and that like the rest of us you are still a learner in this, as well as in all the other great truths of the creed, do you think you could consistently unite with us?"

She answered, "You have made this so plain that I am willing to do so, provided the people thoroughly understand my position."

The matter was presented to the congregation at the mid-week service, in her presence, in a way to satisfy her and all concerned. On the Sunday following this action she united with the church, and was happy in so doing. Her testimonies to Christian faith and experience in the weekly prayer meetings of the church were among the most vital and spiritually intelligent given by those who gladly witnessed to the saving grace of their Divine Lord.

As time went on her intellectual difficulties, as to the doctrine of Christ's deity, disappeared. The metaphysical problems of this truth gave way to its practical power. In her beautiful and consistent Christian life she came, unconsciously, to substantiate St. Paul's declaration, that faith in the deity of Jesus is not an intellectual but a spiritual acquisition, and that "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit."

This experience of honest difficulty in entering a church because of inability to apprehend, intellectually, some article of faith, made it evident to the en-

tire church that subscription to a creed should not be made the condition of membership, but, rather, vital faith in Jesus Christ as one's personal Saviour. The church should, indeed, have its clear statement of doctrine, expressing its consensus of belief and its historic faith, but how can a child, or a person not educated to mature religious thought, intelligently subscribe to a comprehensive creed which required the profound scholarship of able and devout theologians to produce? It would be utter folly to dispense with such a creed in order to meet the whim, the ignorance or the limitations of an individual member, but it is equal folly to insist, as a condition of membership, that a person of such limitations shall subscribe to a statement of doctrine which he can, by no possibility, understand. If he can say, "I believe in God; and that He is my Father; and that He sent Jesus His well-beloved Son to be my Saviour; I accept him as such, and promise to do his will as best I know how, as taught in the Bible and by the Holy Spirit," this experimental faith is all that any church has a right to ask of any candidate for membership.

So convinced was the church of this fact, in its admission of this new member, so troubled with intellectual difficulty and so conscientious in her hesitancy to unite with the church, that by unanimous vote it supplemented its articles of faith with the following conditions of membership:

> "The foregoing articles embody the maturest wisdom of the church on matters of Christian faith and doctrine. They are intended as an expression of the fundamental teachings of the Biblical revela-

tion, and not as a test of qualification for church membership on the part of those new in faith or immature in Christian knowledge.

The basis of membership in the Kingdom of God is not intellectual acceptance of a creed, but repentance of sin, faith in Christ as personal Lord and Saviour, and a purpose to serve Him with all the heart. The Scriptural injunction to grow in knowledge, as well as in grace, implies ignorance and immaturity. The church is the school of faith. Its mission is to educate immature disciples in doctrine, not to receive those exclusively who have solved all the mysteries of a supernatural revelation.

Rejection of fundamental Biblical truth would, necessarily, disqualify one for Christian fellowship; otherwise all, however limited their knowledge or rudimentary their faith, who with reverent and teachable mind love Christ and believe themselves to have been renewed in heart by the Holy Spirit, are entitled to membership in the Church."

This statement relieved many minds, made the relation of immature Christians to their public confession of faith consistent and normal, and prevented any recurrence of the difficulty through which the church had just passed.

PART III

AN ESTIMATE OF VALUES

XVIII

THE REWARDS OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM

NO joy can surpass that of winning a soul to Jesus Christ, or to a higher plane of spiritual life. This is the "joy of the Lord," the joy felt "in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." This was the Master's abiding happiness, the spiritual contentment and satisfaction that he promised his disciples when he said: "That my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

"He that winneth souls is wise;" "And they that be wise," says an ancient prophecy, "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

Such are the rewards that come to an efficient workman in the harvest fields of the Master.

Christianity has been well characterized as the highest form of friendship. It is a friendship not born of human love, a God-inspired affection, an abiding spiritual kinship, the love of Christ reproducing in us its own seeking and saving purpose and passion. When this love becomes manifest in a Christian worker, it is welcomed by unchristian men

with a feeling of confidence, dependence and trust. In the toil, temptation and stress of daily life, human hearts crave the counsel and companionship of some wise and assured friend. The "confessional" is based on a fundamental human need. Young people, especially, with their hunger for the best, their eager outlook on the future, their troubles, doubts, perplexities and defeats, delight to come to a wise and trusted friend and confide to him their innermost purposes, hopes and desires. This is true, also, of people of any age and in any experience of joy or sorrow or need.

The following narrative illustrates the intimacy and mutual confidence of such spiritual companionship: A young man, from a far-off home, came as a stranger to our church. Although not a professing Christian, he was eager to make his life morally and materially a success. He had not yet settled the problems of personal religion, but was purposing to seek and find the truth as God would have him know it. The welcome given him warmed his heart and stimulated his interest. He was invited to many a personal interview. He responded ardently to Christian ideals of character, and to the light that made the truth and the way plain. It was not long before he and his most intimate friend, in whom this experience was being duplicated, were ready to make public confession of their faith in Christ. As soon as he had made this expression of his consecration and life-purpose, he set to work to interest all young men within the reach of his influence, in the church and in the higher things of life. He became, as did

his room-mate, a ceaseless, wise, tactful, winsome personal worker, without making it appear as anything out of the ordinary. His personal approach was so normal and friendly that it did not appear obtrusive, or even as specifically a religious procedure, but simply a natural conversation upon things of ordinary and mutual concern. He always had in view, however, the basal facts in life, which when rightly presented are to any normal person of absorbing interest. Business promotion soon took him to another city, and one cannot better illustrate the gratitude and affection that reward one for helping another to assured ground in faith and religious experience than by quoting from the letter which he wrote after he had gone:

"I want to tell you what the past year has meant to me in my spiritual life. When I came to C. I had all the desires and possibilities for Christian character. I had passed through the sphere of popularity at school and had found it decidedly bubble-like in its termination. My habits and desires were Christian; but I held back a considerable part of myself, not knowing that real happiness lies in giving to others. In the wonderful atmosphere of cordiality that surrounded me while in the company of your dear people, I have awakened to the real things of life. In so far as I am permitted I shall work for God's kingdom on earth.

This is one phase of the change wrought in me, and now I come to another,—not as important as the other, because a result rather than a fundamental. I have been successful in my work with the ———— Railroad. But do you know that my power to advance has been God-given? The very things that have enabled me to grow in Christ have made it possible for me to go ahead. I am told that I have original methods of organization. I should hardly call them that. My power to gain the co-operation of those under me is due to the fact, whether I realize it or not, that each action of mine is coming more and more to be done in the inspiration of my Christian life.

I am happy as I never knew happiness before. My daily Bible readings are under the halo of a new-found appreciation.

I had wanted to tell you these things by word of mouth, but as it could not be, I have written. In this change of mine your share has been no small one. Words can never express my appreciation of the influence of your spiritual vision upon me. I shall probably never get the opportunity to return it in like measure to you and yours, but I can and will pass it on to others.

I shall always think of you as among my choicest friends. Your influence has been second to none but my mother's and father's.

.....

With a son's affection."

One would not be warranted in publishing such a letter did it not reveal so beautifully the soul confidences, the spiritual intimacies that grow up between those who help and those who have been helped in their religious life. One could well afford to give years to unremitting Christian service for the reward of such affectionate gratitude as this.

No work on earth is so dear to the heart of the Master, so rich in its compensations, so productive of spiritual fruitage in the life of the worker. Face to face with souls he catches his best visions of God; fathoms the laws, processes and mysteries of the human spirit; discovers the secret of revealed truth; and becomes immovably confident of the eternal verities of the Gospel, made known in him and through him who brought life and immortality to light, and who said: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

XIX

CONCLUSIONS

THESE narratives of work with individuals could be indefinitely extended. Nothing remains longer or more vividly in mind than the conversations held with persons whom one has sought to win to a vital Christian life. The mind is compelled to be so alert, the heart so full of the passion of the Master, the spirit so under the guidance of the Divine Word, that these personal interviews with souls become a permanent part of one's conscious life.

I

One impression that abides after years of the closest work of this kind is *the need of a divinely courageous thoroughness in dealing with souls.* All souls are alike as regards the universal problem of surrendering the life to God. There may be degrees of conflict, struggle and resistance, but the process and problem in each case is the same, viz.: that of the yielding and obedience of the will to the sovereignty of God. Jesus Christ must be accepted as Lord and Master, if he is to be received as Saviour, otherwise conversion is superficial, and the Christian hope grounded in self-deception and error.

This revolutionary work is fundamental to Chris-

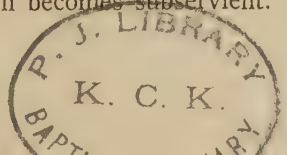
tian character, and to spiritual intelligence and growth. This is what Jesus meant by being born from above. The Holy Spirit accomplishes his renewing work when the will of man voluntarily yields to the will of God. Jesus himself is the model here. He said it was "his meat and drink to do the will of his Father." He lived and moved and had his being in the will of God. It was his supreme aim and delight to "always do those things that are pleasing in his sight."

To enter the Christian life understanding this, and unreservedly accepting it, guarantees thorough conversion and a life of subsequent growth, satisfaction and joy.

II

Oft-repeated and long-continued personal work with people in adult life creates the assured and profound conviction that *early childhood is God's ordained time for conversion and spiritual renewal.*

In infancy and before the period of mature and intelligent volition the will is the willing servant of the affections. It chooses gladly what the heart loves. This is true of all undeveloped and undisciplined persons whether child or adult. The will has not taken its rightful place of sovereignty on the throne of one's being. If the heart always loved what is right and good, the will would have an easy task, and could follow the leadership of the affections without risk to character. All of life's moral disasters come from unregulated affections to which the undisciplined will becomes subservient.


K. C. K.

In childhood the task of guiding the heart to the love of the beautiful, the true and the good, is easy. Children prefer the good to the bad, that which is lovely to that which is ugly, for "of such is the kingdom of heaven." If they are taught early to love the good and the right, the will, under the sway of the pure affection, comes automatically and unconsciously into glad harmony with the good. If Christ is loved the will responds to his goodness and sovereignty, just as a loving and trustful child delights to do the will of a wise and loving parent. This is the work which in the adult is termed conversion. It is exactly the same fundamental process of yielding the will to God which in the grown person is attended with so much conflict and struggle. In the child the work is far more thorough and complete because it has been accomplished without reservation, distrust and antagonism. The love of a little child knows no hesitancy, fear or resistance. The whole being responds to the goodness and will of God, for the infant heart has never been vitiated by suspecting any difference between his goodness and his will. We enter the realm of life's perversion and falseness when we fear that his will is not good, and are thus despoiled, by doubt and distrust, of the very qualities which Jesus said characterized the little child as belonging to the kingdom of heaven.

The problem, then, of religious education is to teach the little child to love Jesus Christ, and the beautiful, the true and the good, as they are revealed in him. When the boy and girl of ten or twelve, after a decade of such intelligent, spiritual instruc-

tion, begin to come to self-discovery and self-interpretation they find that their wills are set on the side of Christian character and ideals. They instinctively resent evil and fear it because the fundamental energy of their moral being,—the will,—is positively on the side of God and the right. Through an entire decade it has been the willing servant and partner of a loving heart, of a pure and heaven-inspired affection, and its moral bent is toward the worthiest object of affection and desire.

It is, of course, impossible to tell, in this beautiful process of development, when the renewing work of the Holy Spirit is accomplished. There are instances in which the spiritual heritage is so vital and strong as to warrant the belief that the second birth, the "new birth," is synchronous with the first, the spiritual with the physical. God's covenant promise includes such a spiritual possibility.

The modern psychologist who would postpone conversion until the period of adolescence, and practically identify it with the changes wrought by nature in the physical system at this crucial era, is nothing less than a pure theorist. He is entirely outside the realm of practical knowledge and experience. He is innocent of the certified conclusions of those who have gained their knowledge in the clinic of personal work with youthful souls.

The storm and stress of the adolescent period do, indeed, deeply affect the religious nature and render the battle of the soul described in an earlier chapter strenuously intense. This period of physical and emotional change awakens the consciousness of per-

sonal independence and individuality. It is the time when mind, heart and will begin to resent interference and outside control. The young person takes the reins of control into his own hands, becomes a law unto himself, rebels against authority, pulls away from restraint and guidance, and battles with conscience and the call of God. Under sympathetic and helpful leadership many a boy and girl win the good fight in this era of moral conflict, but their conversion is anything but a natural evolution. They are victorious only as the moral will makes an intelligent and definite issue between right and wrong, between God and self.

Instead of being the normal time of conversion it is by the very nature of the case one of the most difficult times. The work of religious education and moral choice should have been accomplished before this period of change. Early conversion prepares one for this era of stress and safeguards him while passing through it. It makes the battle less intense and more certain of a favourable issue. It tides one over and carries him through the most critical period in life by the power of a love already centered upon the good, and allegiant to Jesus Christ. No risk is greater than that of deferring the soul's absolute commitment to God until the age of adolescence. The entire moral and spiritual being should be centered in Christ long before this era. Any pastor who has done thorough and intelligent work knows that the average child of seven can understand and definitely appropriate the gracious and saving love of God at that early age. There is sometimes a very

beautiful and surprising spiritual maturity in little children. Religion is as suited to the early youthful mind and heart as sunshine to flowers, as music to birds, as beauty to the eye. Purity and love are the element in which they were born to live and move and have their being. The Catholic church is far more discerning of this possibility of the child's spiritual nature than the average Protestant church. Its entire method of instruction and discipline is conducted on the principle that the whole bent of the mind and soul should be definitely and permanently fixed before the adolescent age. Its hold on its adherents, be it good or bad, is due to this intelligent philosophy of the spiritual possibilities of the child.

Some of the most beautiful, satisfactory and intelligent conversions the writer has ever known have taken place in children of seven years of age. And the work of grace wrought then is always deeper, more stable, more enduring than that wrought in adult life. It gets possession, then, of the entire heart and moral being. The attempt to convert adult people whose religious nurture was neglected in childhood is not only a difficult task, but one that is performed at the cost of an enormous expenditure, not to say waste, of energy. It means the overcoming of a will long set in the wrong direction, the mastery of long established habits, the reversal of the very currents of one's being,—thought, belief, affection, desire, purpose. This can, by the grace of God, be permanently achieved in multitudes of people. The Holy Spirit can work this miracle of spiritual renewal in any heart, at any period in life, when the

will of man becomes responsive and obedient to the will of God. But what a saving of conflict and effort to believe that God's time for this gracious and glorious work is in infancy and early childhood.

The writer has received a goodly number of children into the church at the early age of seven. Their religious experience was in some instances as definite and remarkable as an adult conversion. At the close of a mid-week prayer meeting a child of seven came to her pastor with her mother and said: "I would like to unite with the church at the next communion." "You do, my dear. Why?" She answered, "You know that I have been very sick. One day I heard father and mother praying that God would spare my life, and that I might get well. I knew that I must be very sick, and I promised Jesus that if he would spare my life I would love him with all my heart and live for him, and unite with the church; and now I want to keep my promise." The dear child had wrought the problem out by herself. It was a very deep and beautiful work of grace. Her parents had not directed her at all in the matter. She united with the church at the appointed time. Her Christian life to full-grown womanhood and to motherhood has been one of the most serene, strong, victorious and steadily beautiful lives her pastor has ever known.

Other children of seven have come to him with the same request, asking the privilege of confessing Christ as their Saviour in public. In each case the child had had, even at that early age, some spiritual conflict or crisis, or some marked and blessed experi-

ence of the love of God in Christ Jesus. The capacity of a child of seven to know God, and the maturity of its spiritual experience are rarely discerned, understood, appreciated. The doubting of this early capacity is one of the severest reflections on the spiritual intelligence of adults, and one of the chief sins of religious teachers against the plan and will of God, as well as against the spiritual nature of childhood.

III

Personal evangelism reveals *the divine insight and power of the Word of God,* and the necessity of its constant and familiar use in the work of winning souls to Jesus Christ. It is the text-book of the spiritual life. It is scientific in its method and in the subtle accuracy of its knowledge. It is the only book in the world that makes known "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" by which men are "set free from the law of sin and death." What Jesus is in his moral perfection and ideals to the moral life of mankind, his recorded words and the writings of Paul and John are to the knowledge of the human soul. No other writings can be made a substitute in guiding men into the light. Back of all experience and personal testimony must be the corrective and authority of the Holy Scriptures. Their searching tests are never to be modified or displaced. The Bible is veritably the Book of Life. It is the instrument of the Spirit in conviction and conversion. It is a lamp, a light, a sword, a hammer breaking the flinty rock in pieces, an interpreter of the inner life,

a quickener of the mind, a regenerator of the soul through the power of the Holy Spirit. Through its power the personal evangelist is able to convict men of sin and show them the pathway to life. Without it argument and appeal are practically useless. Its working passages should be at the tongue's end and finger-tips of every would-be winner of souls.

As a text-book in psychology it surpasses all the discoveries, skill, science and philosophies of the world's most eminent specialists. It never theorizes, it proclaims. It never guesses, but speaks with the authority of known truth. It makes man acquainted with himself because it makes him acquainted with God. As regards the fundamental qualities of his moral and spiritual being, self-knowledge is impossible without this higher vision. Without an experimental knowledge of the Word of God the personal worker can neither know himself nor his fellowmen. In all winsome and effective ministry this must be his constant companion and guide.

IV

Instruction in personal evangelism should be a part of the curriculum of every church and of every theological seminary.

Back of it, as its prime essential, should be such a vital belief in the gospel, and such a spiritual vitality as to create, in its membership, Christ's passion for souls. But inspiration must be followed by specific instruction; quickening of mind, heart and spirit, by commitment to definite personal work.

Every Sunday School teacher should be a winner

of souls, a skilled evangelist. His work fails utterly of accomplishing its purpose unless it issues in the conversion of the young people committed to his care. All the officers of a church should be capable of being entrusted with the delicate task of leading an inquiring soul into the light. They should be made to feel that official spiritual leadership is inconsistent without qualification for this supreme work. To this end their office was created. For this purpose the church itself, in all its administrative functions, exists. A church that does not make all its executive and spiritual work focus on the salvation of all the individuals to whom it ministers is not fulfilling its God-given mission.

The ministry itself should be qualified to educate and organize the church for this supreme task of winning men to Christ. If our theological seminaries cannot have the equivalent of a clinic in this department of instruction, they should be religiously vital enough to impress and convince every candidate for the pastorate, that his first duty is to be qualified to lead men to God, and to make his church a converting and redeeming agency in the community. Because this fundamental aim of the church is not ceaselessly kept at the front in all departments of theological instruction, many men consecrated to the ministry spend their lives in conducting services and in running the machinery of an organization. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan is right in saying that a society, department or organization of any kind in the church has no right to exist except its specific and fundamental aim is to assist in the process of win-

ning men vitally to Jesus Christ. Its social work should all be a means to this end. Its amusements, as truly as its preaching and devotional services, should be planned and conducted with this ultimate end in view. Secular entertainment in the church gradually undermines its spiritual influence and robs it of its spiritual motive and power. In meeting the social needs of people and their desire for recreation and a good time, the church must ever keep vividly in mind the end in view, viz.: the salvation of the soul, and its effort to be attractive and winsome must be lifted to this lofty point of vision and purpose.

"It took me six months to get spiritually warmed up after leaving the theological seminary," said a gifted young minister. He affirmed that the emphasis on intellectual work was so exclusive, and the treatment of the Bible and religion so cold, philosophic and rationalistic that he found himself without a message for his people and unable to minister to their spiritual needs. He said that the first half-year in his work as pastor and preacher was a most painful experience, for he was compelled to readjust most of his thinking, and warm up a heart that had become scholastic, perfunctory, and passionless. That this is too common an experience is a severe reflection on the quality of spiritual work done, and the religious aim generated in some of our theological seminaries.

While this was not the writer's experience he, nevertheless, cannot credit the seminary with anything that approximated specific instruction in the art of personal evangelism, or oft-repeated emphasis

upon the fact that it is the minister's first task to make himself a winner of souls, that every sermon, every department of work, every society and organization in the church should have this as its initial and ultimate aim.

Religious experience is not an emotional and sentimental thing, but the most intelligent, deliberate, rational factor in life. It is the discovery and appropriation of life according to God's ideal and plan. The passion of the great apostle who said, "Brethren, I beseech you, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable,—rational, spiritual,—service," illustrates the motive that should give inspiration to every theological teacher, every minister, every church, every official and member in the church. In other words, there must be a revival of the spiritual passion of the early Christian, throughout the rank and file of the church to-day, if the church is to make itself the leading and the constructive power in the life of our age. It will be swamped, amid the seething currents of our industrial, commercial, political, and grossly worldly social life unless it has this all-conquering passion.

The church must put new emphasis on its evangelistic mission. It must recover its effectiveness in winning souls. It must train its officials and teachers, and inspire its new converts to this end. It will then find itself coming back to a normal, sane, vital, joyous, winsome, convincing, victorious spiritual life.

That this new day is dawning is the confident belief of many of the spiritual leaders of our time.

XX

A FINAL WORD OF TESTIMONY

ONE who has watched the course of human events and the transmutations of thought during an active ministry of forty and two years would have a dull heart and a barren experience had he no convictions to record and no testimony to give after such a period of observation and discovery. Among the indelible impressions made by these more than two score years, are:

I

The changeableness and unreliability of human thought. The rapidity with which new theories, isms, doctrinal fads, and scientific pronouncements, succeed and displace each other, is a startling evidence of this fact.

Christianity would be in a sad plight if its adherents must needs be thrown into perturbations by every wind of doctrine, scientific or religious, that sweeps across its horizon. Unless it is grounded in elemental truth, and in laws, principles, processes and experience that are the same from age to age, then its house is built on shifting sand. If the ancient psalmist, with great calmness of faith, could say, "Be still, and know that I am God," much more can the Christian believer of to-day. If Paul, in the

maelstrom of seething conflict and persecution could with quietness and serenity affirm, "I know him whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day," surely the faith of this later age should be even more peaceful and assured. "The peace which passeth all understanding" is no myth of an outgrown sentimentalism, but the permanent heritage of those who have experienced "the power of an endless life." He who is hesitating, timid or apologetic in his attitude to or in his proclamation of the Gospel of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, has not gone deeply enough in his religious experience to apprehend the verities of his own faith, or the eternal vitalities of the Christian religion. A new note of confidence throughout the Church and the pulpit of to-day would be like ozone to gasping lungs, or like tonic to an enfeebled heart.

(1) During the first decade of the period under consideration the Christian world was thrown into violent discussion and controversy by the theory of a Second Probation for the unsaved, after death. Born of the personal incompatibilities, not to say antagonisms, of two eminent professors in one theological seminary, the conflict of feeling soon preoccupied the pulpit and press of Protestantism, and at last converted the platform of the oldest Foreign Missionary Board in the country into a battle-ground of contending opinions, on which the giants of the denomination matched each other with impassioned eloquence and masterful debate. It was a brilliant, heated controversy which stirred men's souls to their

profoundest depths. The most eminent, historic, Puritan church in New England threw down the gauntlet to the American Board by refusing to continue its munificent contributions to missions unless a certain young advocate of Second Probation was commissioned to the foreign field. Against the best wisdom and conservative judgment of the Board, for the sake of peace, this concession was made. Time soon passed verdict on this action. The young missionary, finding himself without an adequate evangel and unfitted for his uncongenial task, early sought refuge in another vocation. The universal silence that followed his resignation was more eloquent than speech. In a decade the contention that had filled a hemisphere with its logomachies and had grieved the Church with its needless and useless strife, suddenly dropped out of public interest and discussion. The issue has never been revived.

(2) Speedily another tidal wave of controversy swept over the entire Christian world, as the result of the new views of the Bible presented by the often misunderstood science of "Higher Criticism." The negative and "destructive" nature of some of its conclusions did, indeed, threaten the authority and integrity of the Bible. In their extreme form they found expression in the kaleidoscopic colours of the Polychrome Bible. The minute and fanciful analysis which assigned the Biblical text, by sheer guesswork, to an indefinite number of imaginary authors, caused the eminent professor, George Park Fisher, to judicially affirm: "These colours will fade." They faded before the general public had oppor-

tunity even to see them. Another keen valuation of this extravagant type of literary conjecture is given in the following quotation from the writings of Dr. George A. Gordon, one of the profoundest philosophers and metaphysicians and one of the most liberal preachers of this generation: "A work of pure skepticism, directed against historical criticism, would greatly clear up a confused, an almost intolerable situation. Analysis and elimination, on the basis of arbitrary like and dislike, have done their work; the theory that, in order to get the historical situation represented by an ancient literary production, it is necessary first to tear it to tatters, is beginning to lose interest for sensible men. * * * It would seem that one is hardly justified thus to reduce author or editor or both to lunacy or want of conscience, in order to buttress a theory. General cleavages are evident, grand outlines obviously declare their difference; it is another matter to reduce criticism of ancient documents to the play of a puppy with a rag."

Time has drawn a clear line of demarcation between the constructive and destructive elements in modern Biblical studies, and the Church is no longer solicitous as to the security and trustworthiness of the inspired Word.

(3) The Theory of Evolution, in its turn, commanded the center of human thought, with its amazing reversals of human opinion as to the age of the world and the method of its creation. The Christian world soon came to realize that a difference in method in no way controverts belief in the neces-

sity of an infinite, omnipresent and omnipotent Creator, that truth in one realm can never conflict with truth in another realm, and that true science and true religion must not only be in harmony with each other, but also in actual partnership, both being expressions of the same infinite Intelligence and purpose.

A revival of the outgrown controversy by certain modern literalists is a unique illustration of inconsistency, inasmuch as the Fundamentalists refuse to be guided and assured by the wisdom and sane advice of Gamaliel, who prevented the belligerent conservers of orthodoxy in his day from killing the advocates of the new faith, saying: "Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown: but if it be of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them; lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God."

The Church in its sanest leadership, to-day, is resting in the calm assurance that truth is ultimately its own vindicator, and that error or false doctrine cannot long contend successfully against it.

3. Another phase of the world's rapidly changing thought is seen in

(4) The lamentable and ominous estrangement, on the part of many of the larger colleges and universities, from the Church, and even from vital Christianity. There are splendid exceptions to this rule. Some of our smaller colleges still retain their evangelical spirit and purpose.

As indicated in the preceding paragraphs, the past

two decades and more have been a period of scientific investigation and inquiry. No department of the universe has intentionally been left unexplored. Nothing has been taken for granted. Ancient sanctities have been ignored. The iconoclasm of cherished beliefs has been ruthless. The quality of personal religion has declined, and the devotional life, on the part of multitudes, has suffered eclipse. Moreover, specialization in departments of science has dwarfed technical students to narrow realms, interest and vision. Human values have been lost to view. Character, the chief end of education, a generation ago, has ceased to be an object of concern on the part of the average college instructor. Faculties, once constituted of devoutly religious, spiritually minded men, now rarely acknowledge interest in the work and worship of the Church. The extreme to which this agnosticism can go is illustrated by this verbatim quotation from the recent utterance of the head of a department in one of our largest state universities: "To me the world seems a rotten apple, covered with vermin, swung at the end of a string by an idiot boy, by the light of a guttering candle." Such is the creed of this scientific materialist. If this is all that scientific scholarship can give the world, such scholarship is not worth the having. It dwells in a cave of its own making, which shuts out the blue vault of heaven and the radiance of skies luminous with sunlight or with the splendour of constellations that open to undimmed eyes a universe abounding with evidence of an infinite, almighty and all-wise Creator.

The picture is not one of unrelieved gloom. The very questionings of an age, if sincere, are evidence that the human mind will not rest satisfied until its problems are solved. Moreover, the Church may be, in part, to blame for the negations of the hour. As soon as it gives proof of possessing the dynamic of divine power, and the purpose and passion of an exhaustless love, its testimony will be irresistible and skepticism will vanish in its presence as the mists of morning are dissolved by the warmth and glory of the rising sun.

II

Another verified impression of the passing years is *the incapacity of the mind to apprehend the deeper truths of life and religion apart from the intuitions of a renewed spirit.* The indwelling love of God is the light of all our seeing. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

It is difficult to understand how any man can escape becoming a rationalist, in view of life's mysteries and of the limitations of human knowledge, unless he has had some evidence of supernatural power. As far as the writer is concerned, a far-reaching work of grace that visibly and permanently transformed the lives of nearly two hundred people, in his early ministry, forever banished doubt as to the verities of Pentecost and the miracle of the new birth. That work, so deep and abiding, so beneficent and redemptive, steadied him through all the shifting phases of human thought in after years, and dispelled uncertainty as to the divinity of Jesus, the per-

sonality of the Holy Spirit, and the need of spiritual renewal on the part of all mankind. Without such showers from on high and such confirmations in one's innermost life, the fountains of the deep dry up in the human soul, and the intellect becomes agnostic as to the deeper verities of truth and life.

Books are essential to the nourishment of the mind, but books alone leave the intellect high up on the sands and rocks of a surfless shore. Only as one launches out into the deep, and lets down the net, and draws it in laden with fish, has he the proof that every spiritual being needs of God's presence and renewing power. The sight of one life genuinely saved has more confirming effect on one's convictions and faith than all the intellectual gropings of a lifetime. The supreme need of the Church and of its ministry to-day is the confirming evidence of such spiritual renewals of its own life and of the life of the outside world.

III

Such are the conditions, opportunities and problems that evermore confront the Church. Can the Church meet and vanquish the stupendous obstacles that challenge its power? Can it win the agnostic scholarship in our higher institutions of learning to faith and to sympathetic co-operation with its God-given task? Can it purge politics of corruption, and industry and trade of unfraternal strife? Can it reorganize society on the basis of brotherly love, and make the principles and spirit of the kingdom of God operative in all human affairs? These are the ques-

tions that underly and give inspiration to all intelligent and effective evangelism.

For the Christian there is but one answer to these inquiries. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. The potentialities of the Gospel do not vary from age to age. The evangel that made the early Christians victorious over the paganism of a benighted and hostile empire can, from the standpoint of its present prestige and renown, work mightier miracles than past centuries have ever known. The marvel of Christianity is its *timelessness*. Its truths are not subject to the moods and tendencies of the fleeting generations. They do not veer with every shifting wind of human doctrine. He alone, of all men, is up-to-date who stands side by side with the Master at the van of human progress, thinking his thoughts and doing his work.

The Golden Age of Christianity lies in the future, not in the past. Multiplying signs indicate that the Church is on the threshold of a new heroic era, surpassing in glory and achievement the brightest era of days gone by. There are those, in increasing numbers, who are confidently assured of this, and who are preparing themselves in mind and heart for their God-given opportunity and task. The problem of the Church is to equip its membership for the new crusade. If the forbidding, agnostic, immoral eighteenth century could blossom out into the evangelistic and missionary fervour of the nineteenth century, through the preaching of Wesley and his godly confreres, surely this era of calamity and war, of materialism and gross evil, can and will experience

a similar reaction, revulsion and revival, until the very forces of our material civilization become agencies of spiritual power in the kingdom of the living God.

IV

Finally, the most assured, invincible, restful conviction that has resulted from a life study of spiritual verities in self and in others is that *the Church must return to its original evangel of salvation through faith in the mercy, grace and forgiving love of a Divine Redeemer.* This is not merely a question of the modern interpretation of the Person of Jesus, or of the efficacy of the atonement, but of man's permanent and inherently right relation to an infinitely holy God. The doctrine of Justification by Faith runs far back of any conception of Christ's person and sacrificial work. Abraham apprehended it when he abandoned all claim to an adequate, self-acquired and satisfying righteousness of his own. His justification was the result of a faith which surrendered all title to personal merit, and which was "reckoned to him for righteousness," because in its renouncement of self-worthiness and in its utter abandonment to the will and guidance of Jehovah, it potentially included the righteousness which God required.

The spiritual life of the modern Church is becoming too shallow to apprehend the philosophy of the Gospel, which is the philosophy of redemption. Unitarianism, notwithstanding its intellectual culture and its ethical idealism, stands not only for an inadequate appreciation of Christ's person and work, but also

for a superficial spiritual life. "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." The secret of an effective evangel is in making men conscious of their spiritual poverty and of their need of God's infinite and saving grace. Irrespective of Christ's presence in history this is the permanent need of the world. Through his capacity to reveal and meet this need, Jesus becomes "the Way, the Truth and the Life" for all mankind. From Abraham to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, from Isaiah to Paul, from Paul to Luther, and from Luther to the present hour, the gospel that has had a revolutionary effect on human character and life, that has actually redeemed men from the love and power of sin, has been the gospel of a sacrificial love embodied in the teachings of Jesus, and defined and expressed in the historic doctrine of Justification by Faith. To surrender this doctrine is to abandon Christianity as a redemptive religion.

Whenever the Church has allowed the New Testament to speak its own unqualified message, without apology or adulteration, it has gripped the conscience and regenerated the life of entire generations. Its unhesitating proclamation to-day will accomplish the same re-creative work, and will prove the Gospel, as twenty centuries have already proved it, to be "the power of God to every one that believeth."

Printed in United States of America

DATE DUE

APR 2 1984

Apr 16, 1984

Apr 30, 1984

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

CENTRAL BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
0 0021 0020615 6

269.1
P913

Pratt, Dwight Mallory.

AUTHOR

The Master's method of winning men.

TITLE

269.1
P913 Pratt, Dwight Mallory.
The Master's method of winning men.

7599